STEPHEN KING'S "THE MONKEY"

Adapted for the screen by Osgood Perkins

Atomic Monster
The Safran Company

[3rd revision]
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OVER BLACK

A RUSTY CREAKING, worthy of Stephen King's 1980s Maine.

Superimpose title:

Here among the jackals, apes and vultures that howl and growl and squeal and crawl, one is fouler than the rest... This beast would gladly undermine the earth, and swallow all creation in a yawn...

"Flowers of Evil", 1855

The title fades, another appears:

I took care of it. That's why God made fathers, babe... That's why God made fathers.

"Creepshow", 1982

This second title fades more slowly, for profundity's sake.

The screen stays BLACK for a longish moment before a SUDDEN, SHRILL BLARE OF HORROR MOVIE MUSIC and --

Superimpose our title: **STEPHEN KING'S THE MONKEY**

A HOUSE IN MAINE [DAY / 1985]

There's a small attic window on this side and, on the roof, an **iron weathervane** that's making the RUSTY CREAK.

A **HORNET** lands on it. A big sucker. CREAK. A second hornet. A third. Pivoting the arrow with a CREEEAAAAAK, and --

IN THE BACKYARD

An **OLDER WOMAN** [70s] waters a garden box, HUMMING. A large **HORNET** lights on a flower. The Woman grimaces, turns the hose on it, drowning the bug away and resuming her work.

CREAK. She pauses to look back at her house: a dozen hornets now on the weathervane, pivoting it with a CREEEEEEAAAAAK.

A thick BUZZING comes hard in her direction and a fat hornet lands on her cheek and sticks there. She pulls at it, but it's dug in, and only stretches the skin on her cheek --

She looks up at the house, hornets landing on the weathervane in fat clumps, positively encrusting it, and --

Now in the attic window, seen from a safe distance, a **TOY MONKEY**, its yellow eyes watching her from the shadows --

In its lap, a **drum**, and in its raised hand, a **red drumstick** --

The Woman nearly forgets the hornet on her cheek --

OLDER WOMAN
How on God's Green Earth did you --

But another incoming hornet flies into her throat, stopping the rest of her sentence with a GAG --

The Monkey watches as she claws her throat, bugs coming fast, covering her head, wriggling into her ears, up her nostrils --

The shapes of their scrabbling bodies visible under the surface of the skin on her throat, ballooning in her cheeks --

And in the attic window, The Monkey brings the red drumstick smoothly down to kiss the drum with a sharp TTRRATTT --

The Woman turns the hose into her own face and we **FREEZE FRAME** on her contorted grimace, hose water mid-spray --

HAL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
I don't know if every father passes some kind of secret horror onto his kids...

And CUT TO --

A MAN STANDING OVER A DEEP HOLE

Digging, eyes wide with horror and out of breath and dressed in a torn and tattered **American Airlines pilot uniform** --

HAL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
But mine sure did...

Now holding up a **dusty blue circular hatbox**, crisscrossed with thick chains, the Man HISSES at it --

THE MAN
Who's smiling now you wretched, infernal sonofawhore!?

FREEZE FRAME on his face, teeth set in vengeful madness --

HAL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
This is how I picture my dad. He left when I was little, so I have'ta use my imagination...

The Man unfreezes and hurls the box into the hole; "Let The Good Times Roll" by Shirley and Lee plays --

HAL'S MOM

LOIS SHELBORN [30s, attractive, cool] wreathed in menthol smoke, sun glowing in her 1950s hairdo. Nearly religious.

HAL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
My mom I remember perfectly, like it was yesterday...

Superimpose title: **1958**

HAL'S MOM
(a light mist of sarcasm)
Went out for cigarettes and never came back. That's what they say, isn't it? But your father didn't smoke, the deadbeat. He just left.
(takes a drag, exhales)
I coulda been a stewardess, but I don't need to be going 600 miles an hour all day. 'Course he never took me anywhere. Only brought back foreign knickknacks to cram up the closets. Mexican Jumping Beans, sure. That awful cuckoo clock, sure, sure.

She's addressing her sons **HAL** [12, glasses] and **BILL** [14], sitting there and sponging it up. What else can they do?

HAL'S MOM (CONT'D)
It's true: Hal, you were a colicky baby, cried all day and night for months and months. But still...
(then)
I just can't imagine what it does to boys to have a father that doesn't want to know them...

DISSOLVE TO DARKNESS, and now a **RECTANGULAR OUTLINE OF LIGHT.**

HAL'S MOM (OVER) (CONT'D)
Well. I guess we'll find out.

We see it's **the back of a door** that now CREAKS open to reveal Hal and Bill, standing upstairs in their house, looking into:

THEIR FATHER'S CLOSET [EVENING]

Hanging clothes in plastic stand between us and a deeply-set collection of boxes, all sizes and colors. Bill parts the clothes at **their father's American Airline's pilot uniform.**

BILL
There she is. The old deadbeat's disguise...

HAL
But, if that's his uniform, what was he wearing when he disappeared?

BILL
It's like ballplayers. Every pilot gets a spare, 'case they spill scotch on their main one when there's tuberculosis.

HAL
What's tubbercalosiss?

BILL
It's what they call it when the plane gets bumpy, dumbshit.

FREEZE FRAME on Bill's shitty expression, purely dismissive.

HAL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
My brother Bill was, well, he was my big brother Bill. Used to say *shake on it* then pull his hand back at the last minute. Every time.

Bill looks deeper into the closet. Shadowy back there, so:

BILL
You're smaller. You go.

SOMETIME LATER

Hal and Bill looking through **boxes** containing things like **clogs**, a **Bonzai tree**, a **boomerang** that says Australia!!

Bill is entangled in a hookah while Hal huddles over **the blue box** [the one the Man buried in the desert]; flimsy cardboard and round like a hatbox. Hal slides the lid off to reveal --

The Monkey we saw earlier, nestled in a red felt interior.

Up close, it's bigger than you'd think, and brand new: chestnut brown fake fur, eyes white around black irises. The lips are not entirely closed, suggesting they might open...

Hal lifts it out. Surprisingly lightweight, its arms eerily realistic, a sinewy wire skeleton. The naked skin in its armpits is an odd detail - visible only when it raises one of the **twin red drumsticks** in its hands. *

In its lap, a **snare drum.** It wears purple and yellow striped pants and is unapologetically "shirtless" under a brief, **red vinyl vest.** *

BILL
The hell is that thing?

Bill snatches the Monkey, so Hal looks at the box, reads the words stamped in cheap gold EASTERN EUROPEAN COLD WAR FONT:

HAL
Organ... Grinder... Monkey. "Like Life".

BILL
Where's it from? Paris France or something?

Numbers in **red ink** on the box's bottom: **1 3 0 1 3 0 3 1 0 3.**

HAL
There's numbers. Think it's coordinates?

He looks to Bill for instruction but Bill's examining a **brass key** sticking out from a slit in the Monkey's red vest.

BILL
Think it does stuff if I turn this?

HAL
Don't, Bill. It's dad's.

BILL
What'd you just say to me?
(Hal: i said it's dad's)
Dad's gone, and I'm his next of skin. So everything you see here... <u>is mine</u>.

Bill **cranks** the key. A GRINDING OF GEARS and the SIZZLE of a tiny motor as the Monkey's **lips** part and curl slightly into a "grin" of smoker's-yellow teeth pressed tightly together --

The drumstick arm SPRINGS UP unexpectedly fast and Bill flinches. Its armpit revealed, drumstick high --

It freezes with the arm still up. *Doesn't it hit the drum, too*? Bill tries the key, but it won't budge.

BILL (CONT'D)
Stupid thing's broken.

Bill tosses it at Hal who tries to get the arm down, but it's stuck there. Bill finds a **nudie pen**, *sees what it does* --

BILL (CONT'D)
Don't come in our room, dumbshit...

Bill goes away and Hal blinks at the Monkey, its grinning gaze locked hard on him. There's something about it --

HAL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
This is me, obviously. Or this *was* me, anyway. Me before everything.

Hal doesn't like the feeling he's getting from the thing and carefully replaces it, closing the box over its eyes, and --

WALKING PATH TO / FROM SCHOOL

Hal crosses an overgrown path, turning a corner and coming face to face with a trio of **BULLIES**, fronted by **FLORENCE** [10], a pretty "tomboy"--

FLORENCE
Heard yer dad left yer mom, flied off to Paris, France for cigarettes.

HAL
Well, no, not exactly...

FLORENCE
Wasn't very considerative of him. But hey Moms is tougher than anybody. Moms can kick your ass.
(closer, intimidating)
So, I guess she'll be wearing the pants in the house now, huh?

HAL
I think that's how it works, yeah.

FLORENCE
But you're wearing pants. And two people can't wear the pants in the house at the same time. It's called chaos theory. Saw it on TV.
(for her goons)
Hey, fellas, what say we help this kid here with his pants problem?

HAL'S HOUSE [LATER]

Hal bursts in, red-eyed and **pants-less** --

IN THEIR KITCHEN [SAME]

Hal's Mom knifes the last of the peanut butter from a jar, the blade RATTLING against the hollow glass.

HAL'S MOM
Honey, I'm making PB and J!

Hal ignores her, taking stairs two at a time, careening into:

HAL AND BILL'S ROOM

Toys on the windowsill, Hal goes for a **silver airplane**, picks it up, studies it, wiping tears and snot away, then --

He feels the presence of **The Monkey**, perched high on a bookshelf, its arm **STILL RAISED.** He keeps his eyes on it --

HAL
(calls out)
Mom? Did you put that monkey in my room?

HAL'S MOM (OFF)
Honey you know I don't go in there since I found the stiff sock.

There's something about the way the Monkey looks at him --

KITCHENETTE [LATER / EVENING]

Cuckoo clock on the wall, cutting board where a **large kitchen knife** chops onions, the **toy plane** on the floor, and --

The Monkey at the table with Hal and Bill, drumstick raised. *

Their Mom rushes around, affixing earrings and making dinner prep hard on **BABYSITTER ANNIE**, recent graduate of Bringham Young University, big and sturdy in pigtails.

Bill likes to watch Babysitter Annie do her things -- *

HAL'S MOM
TV for 3 hours but that's it...

On the floor, her heel misses the plane, without seeing it --

ANNIE
You got it, Mrs. Shelborn.

HAL'S MOM
God, call me anything else tonight.
(then)
No fire. No BB gun. Oh, my purse...

ANNIE
I tried to tell 'em no fire.

Annie and Hal's Mom trade places, Annie to the sink, her big bare foot stepping past the plane, never seeing it --

They trade places again, both missing the plane, Annie and the knife back to the onions for a few brisk chops...

HAL'S MOM *
How do I look? Never mind. *

The cuckoo clock opens, gives a **CUCKOO.** It's a familiar sound * but tonight gets Hal's special attention; he looks at it.

And then Hal hears a GRINDING SOUND coming from The Monkey, * looks at it just as it <u>smoothly brings the drumstick down to</u> * <u>kiss the drum</u>**: TTTTRATT.** *

Cuckoo. Mom moves off with a vague wave, just missing the * plane; Annie waves with the hand holding the kitchen knife.

ANNIE
So long, Mrs. S!

Hal looks from The Monkey to see his Mom go out the door. *

Cuckoo. Hal looks to the clock. Is the WHIRRing of its inner gears louder than usual? More *grinding* than usual? And -- *

Hal looks back to The Monkey, now raising **the other drumstick** * **up, its smile grimly fading** -- *

It starts to hit the drum over and over again -- *

TTTRATTT, TTTRATTT, TRRRATTT -- *

Annie comes over with plates, missing the plane, holding the * knife, blade out --

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Oops, almost forgot...

Cuckoo. TRRRATTT, TTTRATTT, TTTRATTT -- *

Annie pivots, foot slipping on the plane, knife spinning out of her hand, the tip going end over end only once on its way to a spot between her big eyes --

ANNIE (CONT'D)
(slurred)
Pop goes the weasel.

Cuckoo. Annie's toes crunch under as she bucks forward, the butt of the knife landing square on the counter's corner --

<u>Forcing the length of the blade through her skull, the tip popping out just over her ponytail, bloodless but bent</u> --

The Monkey, now expressionless again, brings its little red * drumstick down one last time. **TTTRATTT.** *

Hal and Bill are still seated at the table, staring down at * their fallen babysitter -- *

Suddenly Bill stands straight up, and -- *

BILL *
HOLY FU -- *

FREEZE FRAME on Bill before he can get the word out -- *

HAL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
An experience like that might have
brought me and Bill closer...

<u>NEIGHBORHOOD ALLEY [MORNING]</u> *

Hal and Bill walk to school with their metal lunch pails, * staring down in shock at their sneakers as they go. *

HAL *
Hey, Bill? *

BILL *
Yeah, Hal? *

HAL
(uh)
I dunno.

BILL
Yeah. I dunno either.

HAL
You okay after what happened to Babysitter Annie?

BILL
Not really.

Hal dares to sneak a glance at his brother as they walk.

Looks like Bill might be crying a little. He passes his hand quickly under his nose, sniffling quietly.

BILL (CONT'D)
I was gonna marry that girl someday, ya know.

Not what Hal thought he was going to say. But, still --

HAL
Yeah, Bill. I know you were.

They walk on in silence, watching their sneakers.

HAL AS ADULT (V.O.)
But, as it turned out, only one random tragedy wasn't nearly enough.

HAL'S CLASSROOM

Bored 1958 **KIDS**, a **TEACHER** teaches. Hal half-listening.

TEACHER (OFF)
All right take out your math books.

Hal opens his bag, sees **the yellow eyes of The Monkey.** He pulls it out, keeps it under his desk...

He feels the eyes of a **LITTLE GIRL STUDENT,** plainly watching his every move. Hal is about to speak --

LITTLE GIRL
MRS. TORRANCE. HAL SHELBORN IS JERKING HIS MONKEY UNDER HIS DESK.

THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

Hal sits with **PRINCIPAL KING** who's holding The Monkey on his knee like Mr. Rogers, really looking at it. *Gazing* at it.

PRINCIPAL KING
Handsome little devil. Little vest. But we can't have him at school.

HAL
But I didn't bring it to school.

PRINCIPAL KING
Yes, well, I'll have to confiscate him. What does he do with the drum? Probably you turn this key.

HAL
No. I mean. He's fragile.

PRINCIPAL KING
Oh I don't think it'll do any harm.

King cranks the key, GEARS GRINDING as it grins and sharply raises its arm, holds it there. King's anticipation is growing, but the arm just stays there --

PRINCIPAL KING (CONT'D)
Oh.

Just then the **intercom box** on his desk SQUAKS --

INTERCOM ["JOANIE"] *
Principal King, Father Jeffries on the line for you. Again.

KING
(calls out)
Thank you, Joanie. Uh. Tell him I'm not here...

He dismisses Hal with a wave. Hal goes out reluctantly, his eyes lingering on The Monkey perched on King's knee.

Alone with the Monkey, Principal King unsticks his gaze and looks wistfully out the window, clearly moved. Because --

IN PRINCIPAL KING'S MEMORY

King is a little boy, looking up at a **MAN IN A DECORATED ARMY UNIFORM** who looks down at him with plain contempt. His **DAD.**

KING'S DAD
With any luck I'll get shot down over the Pacific so I won't have to come home to find that my son's still just a goddamm pansy.

RESUME PRINCIPAL KING'S OFFICE IN THE PRESENT

That memory always hits hard and King's eyes are tearing up. He clears his throat of an impending SOB, and --

He crosses to **a supply cabinet**, puts The Monkey away, letting his eyes linger before closing the doors --

IN PRINCIPAL KING'S OUTER OFFICE

A bookish **RECEPTIONIST [JOANIE]** at a typewriter when King comes in, putting on his coat.

PRINCIPAL KING
Forgot my lunch today, Joanie. Gonna grab something from the drugstore. Back in a jiffy.

His voice cracked, and Joanie noticed, as he goes out onto --

A SUNNY STREET [MOMENTS LATER]

King crosses the street, hands in his pockets, looking down at his shoes, but definitely heading straight for --

A LIQUOR STORE

King hides in a aisle with a cheap bottle, staring at it with uneasiness. He cracks off the top and takes a hungry gulp. It's been a while. He tucks the bottle into his jacket and --

IN PRINCIPAL KING'S OUTER OFFICE [SAME MOMENT]

DING goes Joanie's typewriter and she pulls the paper out. Pausing to spellcheck, she hears a RATTLING coming from --

PRINCIPAL KING'S OFFICE

Joanie comes in, holds at the sight of the **supply cabinet** rattling and jostling back and forth, just a little, and **TTRATTTT TTRATTTTT TTRATTTT** from within --

ON THE STREET *

King comes out of the liquor store and runs right into **FATHER JEFFRIES** [60s], neighborhood priest who smiles aggressively -- *

FATHER JEFFRIES *
Principal King! I phoned but they said you weren't there!

PRINCIPAL KING *
Father J! No! I was here! Getting something for Mr. Halloran the chemistry teacher! To show some reaction or other!

FATHER JEFFRIES
Ah, science. None for me, thanks!

PRINCIPAL KING
Sorry I mentioned it, Father!

And is that a truck, soft in the distance, approaching down the otherwise empty road...? *

IN KING'S OFFICE [SAME] *

Joanie dares to open the cabinet, and we know what she sees -- *

JOANIE *
What the hay? *

She lifts The Monkey out, **TRATT-TRATTING** on its little drum. *

She turns it over, tries the key to see if it will stop the thing from doing its drumming, but it's good and stuck. *

She turns it back over, watching it drum and drum and -- *

WITH KING AND FATHER JEFFRIES [SAME] *

Yeah that's a truck coming down the road in their direction. *

Somewhere nearby, **church bells** start to CHIME -- *

FATHER JEFFRIES
That's my cue! You'll phone me so we can discuss prayer in school?!

PRINCIPAL KING
You can count on it!

FATHER JEFFRIES
Good afternoon, Principal King!

But he's one of those Priests who puts their hand up in a stiff wave, and lets the other person move away first --

PRINCIPAL KING
And also with you!

Father Jeffries' wave and smile stay stiff as he watches King pivot and take ***one, two, three swift steps*** into the street --

And straight into the path of the oncoming truck!

Which swerves violently to the right, then the left!

Missing King by an inch and slamming on its brakes!

Sending **a long sheet of paper-thin glass** sailing through the air, over the top of the truck's cab and --

Straight past Father Jeffries??

It shatters into a zillion pieces on the asphalt --

IN KING'S OFFICE [SAME]

Joanie turned her head at the sound of SHATTERING GLASS in the distance, but looks to The Monkey as its smile fades, lips straightening, red drumstick coming down with a final --

TTRATTT.

OUT ON THE STREET

An unharmed Principal King looks back at Father Jeffries, still smiling, his hand up in a stiff wave --

And that's when Father Jeffries' head slides from his shoulders, as neat as you please, bloodless as it topples --

FREEZE FRAME on Father Jeffries, his arm up in a stiff wave, and his head halfway between his neck and the ground.

HAL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
That's what it does, you see.
Someone turns the key and the drumstick goes up.

HAL'S MOTHER'S HOUSE [LATER]

Hal running up the street, up to the front door --

HAL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
It comes down again when it chooses who it wants to get next...
(then)
It never takes longer than a day to decide. That's one of its rules.

INSIDE [SAME MOMENT]

Hal bursts in, fists clenched, jaw set --

IN THEIR KITCHEN [SAME]

Hal's Mom punctures hot dogs with toothpicks, skins POPPING.

HAL'S MOM
Honey, I'm making cocktail wieners!

Hal ignores her, takes the stairs two at a time, going for:

HAL AND BILL'S BEDROOM

Hal rushes in, rains puny fists down on Bill who's sitting at a desk fiddling with the insides of a disassembled radio.

HAL
Why'd ya put that stupid Monkey in my bag, you infernal sonofawhore!!

Bill turns it around and with little effort pins Hal.

BILL
You think I wanna touch that thing after you've been with it??

HAL
Get offa me!

BILL
Not til you say you wanna marry it.

HAL
I don't!

BILL
Say *I wanna be Mrs. Stupid Monkey*.

HAL
I wanna be Mrs. Stupid Monkey.

Bill moves spit around in his mouth, Hal's wrists pinned --

BILL
I'm a B52, your face is Japan.

He drops a loogie onto Hal's face. He gets up, expressionless as he offers Hal a hand. Hal doesn't take the bait, but Bill mechanically pulls it back anyway, an odd look in his eyes as he walks away, leaving Hal behind on the ground --

HAL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
Its only other rule is you can't make requests. It kills who it wants to kill, and it doesn't owe you an explanation.

HAL AND BILL'S ROOM [MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT]

Hal stands in blue moonlight next to Bill asleep in his bed, holding **a tube of model glue**, considering Bill's hair, but --

A CREAK from the closet.

Hal looks to it. The door CREAKS open a little more, then stops. It never does that. He picks up a heavy flashlight.

Hal goes over to shine the flashlight, peers inside, sees **the blue box.** He opens it, finds The Monkey, arm down, deadpan --

HAL
(quietly)
I thought Principal King had you...

He gazes into The Monkey's eyes, finds it hard to look away. Something about The Monkey's eyes fills him with... *longing*?

It's a quiet and intense moment. And then --

BILL (O.S.)
BOO!

Hal jumps, gasps and Bill grins shittily; but when he sees that Hal is holding The Monkey --

BILL (CONT'D)
Oh, shit. I'll leave you two alone.

A FRAMED PORTRAIT OF BABYSITTER ANNIE

At her **funeral** in a Mid-Century CHURCH. A **SUBSTITUTE PRIEST** at the lectern [gangly and not ready for this] --

JUNIOR PRIEST
Uh, before we start, some updates on upcoming Church events. Tomorrow is Men's Group in the basement and Thursday we have Father Jeffries', uh, funeral. We'll be going closed casket for that. It's at ten.

In the front row of pews, Hal and Bill in little black suits, their Mother in makeup and black on black, too.

JUNIOR PRIEST (CONT'D)
But, uh, today it's Annie Wilkes, Gone by accident. Or, *in* an accident. Because there are no accidents. I mean, there are and there aren't. So, yes and no.

Hal looks to Bill leaning forward to peer at Annie's corpse. Feeling Hal, he turns and locks eyes. Bill looks profoundly moved, shaken. It's very intense and Hal shifts in his seat.

JUNIOR PRIEST (CONT'D)
But how about cause and effect? You do this and that happens. Turn a key, an engine starts. Turn a... a button... and the television goes.
(uh)
And He works in mysterious ways. God, I mean. Capital H. He doesn't have to explain His will, so why would He? He's huge and we're tiny and we wouldn't understand anyway. Everything for a reason, yes, for sure. But, no, we don't get to know the reason. That's the deal we make entering the kingdom of God. And, well, it is what it is.
(pauses for effect)
It is what it is. Word of the Lord.

Pre-lap the sound of cars WHIZZing past, and --

HAL'S MOM [PRE-LAP]
Everything's a goddamn accident.

PICNIC AREA [LATER THAT DAY]

Hal and Bill eat ice cream in their suits, Mom a cigarette --

HAL'S MOM
Or nothing is. Either way, same thing. Things happen or they don't happen. There's no rule, no rules. It's not *if*, it's *when*. Everyone dies and that's life. The best we can do is not think about it too much.

Hal listens, Bill scrapes his cup, probably listening. Their Mom kills her cigarette in her Rocky Road, exhales smoke.

HAL'S MOM (CONT'D)
To hell with it. Let's go dancing.

1950s DANCE MUSIC plays and -- *

THEIR LIVING ROOM

Hal and Bill dance with Mom on the carpet; without sunglasses or shoes she's alive and smiling, can really dance...

OUTSIDE, we watch them dance in the window, an idyllic moment cut short by the SHRILL HAMMER of a **school lunch bell** --

HAL'S CLASSROOM / DETENTION

Outside, we hear marching band **snare drums** in machine gun unison. Hal sits with a **BUZZCUT KID** with no real future.

BUZZCUT KID
I heard Principal King saw the whole godfrickin' thing, Father Jeffries cut right down the godfrickin' middle, like * godfrickin' salt and pepper shakers * of himself. *

Hal hears him, but he's tracking Bill and his bully Florence coming his way with cardboard boxes overstuffed with school-lunch **bananas,** shitty smiles plastered on their faces.

HAL'S HOUSE

Hal bursts in, lumpy banana chunks all over, in his hair --

IN THEIR KITCHEN [SAME]

Hal's Mom has an icing bag in her fist, expressing a squirt of icing into a large glass bowl on the counter. **SPPLORCH.** *

HAL'S MOM
Honey, I'm making devil's food!

Hal ignores her, takes the stairs two at a time, going for --

HAL AND BILL'S ROOM

Stopping hard at the sight of The Monkey sitting on his bed.

HAL
(soft, intense)
You. It's because of you that deadbeat Bill did this to me. I tell him to stop but he won't. He'll never stop, you'll see.
(picks up the Monkey)
You know who I'm talking about, don't you? Bill... That kid who lives in here with me.

Hal hears BILL COMING HOME downstairs, Hal's eyes shifting --

BILL (OFF/DOWNSTAIRS)
(calls out)
Mom? You home? When's dinner?

HAL'S MOM (OFF/DOWNSTAIRS)
(calls out)
Where the hell else would I be?

HAL
(hushed, to the Monkey)
And you wanna know what? I wish Bill was dead.

Hal lingers on the Monkey's eyes, pauses over the key, then turns it hesitantly, then a second time with no hesitation --

The Monkey's grin appears and Hal flinches when the drumstick arm shoots up. Hal feels suddenly scared -- *

The Monkey's arm comes down immediately. *

TTRATT. *

And The Monkey doesn't even hold a moment's pause before -- *

TTRATTT TTRATTT TTRATTT TTRATTT TTRATTT TTRATTT -- *

HAL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.) *
*

Hal hears -- *

BILL (OFF/DOWNSTAIRS)
Mom?

Hal waits, but doesn't hear his Mom respond. He only hears a heavy sound of GLASS BREAKING, turns his head to the sound, * his eyes going wide -- *

IN THE KITCHEN

Bill comes in, finds his Mom at the sink, a large broken glass bowl at her feet, one hand holding the icing bag, the other bracing the countertop, head down, eyes closed.

BILL
You're not even cooking it yet??

Her hand with the icing bag goes up, suddenly, as if to stop his talking, then drifts to her forehead, eyes still closed --

HAL'S MOM
I'm sorry Bill...

WITH HAL [SAME MOMENT]

Hal looks back at The Monkey as it brings its drumstick to * rest with one final -- *

TTRATT. *

The Monkey's smile fades and straightens out. And in Hal's * eyes, we can almost see his heart breaking -- *

IN THE KITCHEN [SAME MOMENT]

Mom opens her eyes, filling with bright red blood, her mouth and nose dribbling blood, too. Bill recoils --

Mom squeezes the icing bag until it POPs, and she crumples inelegantly face-first down onto the linoleum, dead --

Bill in shock, his face threatening to crumple into tears, grief thawing under the heat of rising rage.

WITH HAL *

He knows what's happened. His hands are shaking, tears on their way. *

HAL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.) *
The doctors called it a "boomerang aneurism". *
(then) *
The chances of it happening are one in 44 million. *

He puts The Monkey into its box, lingering on its awful eyes. *

HAL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.) *
But all that means is it has to happen to someone. *

He replaces the lid and slides the box as far back into the closet as it will go. *

It feels like the closet goes much farther back than we expect it would, or could, and into much deeper darkness. *

Hal keeps pushing it farther and farther back -- *

A HARD CUT TO BLACK, and -- *

OVER BLACK *

Superimpose title: **1985** *

But the black screen is actually the back of a closet door, opened now by the **OLDER WOMAN** from the opening [before she was destroyed by hornets]. She surveys the closet.

OLDER WOMAN
Okie dokie. It's now or never.

LATER, she puts a last box down. That's all, but, oh, there's **a familiar circular blue box** back there. How'd she miss it before? Hm. *

She opens the flap, taking out **The Monkey**, clean and dry and apparently still brand-new. *

OLDER WOMAN (CONT'D)
Well, that's different.

She turns it over. **The brass key is missing**.

THE HOUSE IN MAINE [EARLY MORNING]

The iron weathervane on the roof, a **YARD SALE** sign in the grass, a **1981 Toyota wagon** in the driveway.

The Older Woman goes to work unfolding card tables, affixing price tags, placing **The Monkey** prominently on a front table, sitting atop its blue box. *

Across the street, a **THRASHER** [20s, long hair and bangs, like a lost Ramone] rolls up on a skateboard, spots The Monkey.

Thrasher goes over, picks up The Monkey, turns it over, sees the hole where the key should be --

He thinks to stick his finger in the hole. It goes in deeper than he thought it would. It feels weird so he pulls it out.

Turning it over to look in its eyes, Thrasher's gaze goes wistful with memory [as with Principal King]. He shakes it off angrily, looks for the Older Woman, holds up The Monkey.

THRASHER
Like. How much?

MOVING WITH THRASHER ON HIS SKATEBOARD

Down a neighborhood street, The Monkey under his arm. He side-eyes **a patrol car;** the COP clocks him, but doesn't bother.

THRASHER
(to himself)
Dumb ass cops don't know me, don't know shit.

IN A FINISHED BASEMENT

The Monkey sits on a coffee table with ashtrays and empties, roaches, bongs and bongos, the air thick with stale smoke.

And opposite, Thrasher and **HIS FRIEND** are watching it, very low slung on a very depressed couch. They speak, but barely.

HIS FRIEND
What you mean it kinda reminds you of your dad? Like, you mean the little vest?

THRASHER
No, it makes me think about my dad. Like inside my head. Like *makes me*.

HIS FRIEND
(long pause)
Brutal.

Thrasher can't really figure it out.

HIS FRIEND (CONT'D)
You still gonna sell it to the crazy dude who doesn't leave his house?

THRASHER
(long pause)
Yeah. Cuz I need the fifteen bucks more than I need to be thinking about my lousy deadbeat dad all the time.

HIS FRIEND
Fifteen bucks is rad.

THRASHER
Stupid thing's broken anyway.

But Thrasher's eyes say he doesn't really believe that.

OFF The Monkey sitting on a coffee table in a stoner basement in 1985 Maine, we go to -- *

GUITAR CENTER / SUBURBS

HAL [37, somewhat updated glasses] is stationed in **synths**, * styled with black felt and stars like Space Mountain was.

He's reading a **parenting book: "Fatherhood VII"** by Ted Somebody. Hal reads a sentence, wonders if it's bullshit or --

His Texas Instruments **calculator watch** BEEPs so he goes to --

THE MANAGER'S OFFICE

Hal in the door, with his **BOSS** [23, Glam-Rock] --

HAL
Hey, Brek...

BREK
Hal. Man. Come in. Come in.

HAL
Oh, nah, that's cool. Just gotta run early today. If you remember...

Brek doesn't remember.

HAL (CONT'D)
Gotta pick up my kid.

BREK
Wait. You got a kid? Shit, man. That sucks. Does it live with you?

HAL
No. I get to see him once a year, though. I'm taking him to Wet Willies. You know, waterslides.

Hal really thinks that should be more than enough, but --

BREK
Shit, man, that sucks. Once a year? That's in the settlement? My parents are divorced so I'm pretty much an expert on these matters.

HAL
The settlement. Yeah. *

BREK
Shit, man, that sucks. Your ex-wife must be somekinda mega bitch, huh?

HAL
Oh. No. Once a year was my idea. Turns out I'm a bad influence.
(Brek waits)
Kinda born under a bad sign.
(Brek waits)
Yep. Here comes trouble.

Brek stares thickly at Hal, looks him up and down.

BREK
Who...? *You*?

HIGHWAY [DRIVING]

Hal's **yellow Gremlin [car]** carves a route through **SUBURBS**, * getting *richer* as he goes, increasingly big houses, and --

OUTSIDE A GAUDY TOO-MANY-BEDROOMS HOUSE

Hal is parked in his car, having just finished a roach, gray weed smoke dense in the airless car cabin.

Stoned but not happy, Hal deals with a Darth Vader birthday card bearing the sentiment: ***JOIN ME IN WISHING YOU A HAPPY BELATED BIRTHDAY.***

He's scratched out the ***"A"*** and added an ***S*** to 'birthday', pen now hovering over the signature. So far he's written ***from...***

He signs ***Hal***. It looks weird. He adds, in parenthesis: *(**Dad**).*

Does that look weirder? He sighs, looks up at the house, really NOT wanting to go in, but knowing he has to, and so --

IN A HOME OFFICE IN THE TOO-MANY-BEDROOMS HOUSE

TED from Hal's book [50s, hair helmet, turtleneck] in a leather chair, his own books on a pedestal next to his head, as if a book-signing might break out. Titles like: ***The Male Member (of the Family)***, ***Jesus and Dad***, ***Fatherhood III...***

Ted waits expectantly, looking across at Hal and Hal's ex-wife **KATIE** [late 30s] on distant ends of the same sofa.

KATIE
He's been asking about you more than ever, Hal.

HAL
About me? Why?

KATIE
Because you're his father. He's doing a family tree for a school project, and wants to include you as one of the branches.

TED
And what is a boy if not a system of interlocking bio-neurological *urges* to know his father, and, indeed, to be known in return?

HAL
Why can't you tell him about me?

KATIE
Hal, I've known you since you were 19 and I don't even know your favorite color.

HAL
That's because I kind of like all of them.

TED
Hal, if I might, what about being a father feels so difficult for you?

HAL
Well. My father left when I was a kid, and my mom died. Suddenly.

KATIE
Your mom died suddenly in the 50s.

HAL
The *late* 50s. I only missed seeing Petey last year because of my, you know, my last minute work thing.

TED
And it's because you care so much that you reenact onto Petey your own father's abandonment of you?

HAL
You're not charging me for this, are you? He's not charging me for this, is he?

TED
Your money is not what I'm after.

HAL
What does that mean?
(then, to Katie)
What does that mean?

KATIE
It means you won't have to worry about any of this anymore. Ted has decided to legally adopt Petey.

HAL
Whoa. Hold on. You're not after my money but you are after my kid?

KATIE
Please don't call him your kid anymore.

Hal stops. That felt really shitty.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Once the adoption's been finalized it won't be necessary for you to see Petey at all.
(then)
(MORE)

KATIE (CONT'D)
In the meantime, take this final week and have a real blast, lock in some memories, and then cleanly cut it off.

TED
Like a cauterized limb.

KATIE
That's what you want, isn't it?

HAL
No. It's not. I want to spend time with Petey it's just. I can't. And.

Katie and Ted wait. But the only thing that comes out of Hal's mouth is a low sigh. It's not a good moment for him.

PETEY (OFF)
What are you guys talking about?

Hal looks over to see **PETEY** [14], standing in the doorway.

The Universe is a funny f&*%er, and Petey looks just like **YOUNG BILL** [let's say they're played by the same actor].

HAL
Petey. Hey.

HAL'S GREMLIN [DRIVING]

The birthday card ripped open on the dash; Hal has been driving in silence, Petey in his Walkman headphones --

HAL
What tape you got in there?

Petey stops the tape - CLUNK.

PETEY
Huh?

HAL
What are you listening to?

PETEY
REO Speedwagon. You like them?

HAL
Is that the same as Supertramp?

PETEY
No. Supertramp is Supertramp. REO Speedwagon is REO Speedwagon.

HAL
Cool.

They drive in silence for a moment, and --

HAL (CONT'D)
How's your mom?

PETEY
She's married to a shrink, how should I know how she is?

HAL
You still calling him 'sir'?

PETEY
No, now he's trying to make me call him 'Dad'.

HAL
What do you mean *make you*?

PETEY
Not like with Indian-Burns, but whenever I say something to him, he adds *'Dad'*, like I forgot it. I go *no thanks I don't want any more lasagna*. And then he goes *"Dad"*, like that.
(then)
I try not to talk very much anymore and that helps.

HAL
How does that help?

PETEY
Ted says he can do 7 pull-ups... so <u>in my head</u> I say *yeah, what are you Christopher Reeve*? Because when I say it in my head he can't put *Dad* after it. At least he hasn't been able to do it yet.

They continue in silence, Hal stealing a glance at Petey --

HAL
You changed a lot since the last time I saw you.

PETEY
Maybe if you saw me more often it would dull the shock. But I guess it doesn't really matter anymore.

HAL
No. It does matter.

PETEY
Okay, then it does matter. In fact, a lack of consistent reflection from the father is a leading cause of impotence and violent tendencies in males later in life.

HAL
Jesus. Where did you hear that?

PETEY
Just took a bunch of bullshit Ted says, stuck 'em in like Mad-Libs.

HAL
Hey. Language.

PETEY
Really?

HAL
Really. My car, my rules.

Petey looks at him, unimpressed. Unfazed.

PETEY
Mom says your dad left and your mom died when you were a kid, so you have no idea what a parent is even supposed to do. Is that true?

HAL
Which part?

They drive in silence for a long moment.

HAL (CONT'D)
You can listen to your headphones again, if you want.

PETEY
Your car, your rules, Hal.

Petey puts his headphones back on and Hal sighs, soundlessly.

ESTABLISHING A ROADSIDE MOTEL [NIGHT]

Hal's Gremlin parked in the lot.

IN THE MOTEL ROOM

Hal watches from an uneasy chair as Petey unzips his overnight bag, taking out a stuffed animal, a notebook.

Petey opens the notebook, holds a pencil.

PETEY
Did you have any brothers or sisters growing up?

HAL
Is this for your family tree homework assignment?

PETEY
I guess so. *

The strained silence between them is as thick as rubber.

HAL
So. What's the scariest waterslide they've got at Wet Willie's?

PETEY
The scariest is either Hot Potato Drop or the Organ-Grind-Inator.

Hal feels a shiver of deja-vu, holds a half-pause before --

HAL
Well. I can't wait to see you conquer both of them.

PETEY
Mm hm. Cool.

Hal wonders what to do with himself. *

HAL *
I didn't, by the way. Have a * brother or any sisters. *

PETEY *
So you were an only child like me? *

HAL *
Mm hm. *

PETEY *
Cool. *

Petey writes in his notebook. It's sad and quiet in the room. *

PRE-LAP the sound of a **shrilly ringing payphone**, and -- *

HAL IN BED [LATER THAT NIGHT]

Hal is wide awake in his bed, staring at the cottage cheese ceiling, a **payphone ringing shrilly outside** somewhere. * *

He's trying to be calm, but the phone is ringing so hard, so insistently. Petey's asleep so Hal yanks the sheets off -- * *

THE MOTEL PAYPHONE

Hal can't believe there's no one around to --

HAL
(grabs the receiver)
Seems like whoever you're calling doesn't want to talk, so...

A MAN'S PHONE VOICE
Hello, dumbshit.

HAL
(long pause)
Bill...?

We don't see **ADULT BILL** [39] yet, we only hear his voice on the line, his mouth too close to the receiver.

BILL'S VOICE
I can't be the only person who calls you dumbshit.

HAL
But how did you know where...?

BILL'S VOICE
It's just numbers.

HAL
I haven't heard from you in 10 years? Or seen you in, what... 20?

BILL'S VOICE
11 and 19.

HAL
Hold on. Where are you?

BILL'S VOICE
I have news. Aunt Ida is no more.

HAL
Oh. Well. I guess she was pretty old, huh. Was she sick?

BILL'S VOICE
No. Seems if anything the poor old girl was having a renaissance.

Hal holds. He doesn't want to ask the next --

BILL'S VOICE (CONT'D)
It was Giant Asian Hornets, Hal. Stings on over 90% of... her *head*.

HAL
That's rough.

BILL'S VOICE
They're calling it a freak thing. Less than a one in a million shot.

HAL
So what?

BILL'S VOICE
So someone has to go look through her things. And we're next of kin.

HAL
Technically *you* are. And this week I'm with Petey. So, no.

BILL'S VOICE
Petey's with you?

HAL
What do you want, Bill?

BILL'S VOICE
You need to go through Aunt Ida's closets, make sure <u>it</u> isn't there.

HAL
It's at the bottom of the well.

BILL'S VOICE
It can teleport and you know it.
(then)
(MORE)

BILL'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Less than one in a million, Hal. From *Asia.*

HAL
Yeah I heard you.

Bill and Hal hold a pause.

BILL'S VOICE
You could bring Petey along. Let him see his dad being braver than usual.

HAL
Petey doesn't need to see... Why would it be at Aunt Ida's house?

BILL'S VOICE
It's attached itself to our family, and it likes to kill us, in case you haven't noticed.
(then)
I don't want to die. Do you? And you don't want Petey to die...

Hal pinches his eyes, tries to think.

HAL
And if I do find it? Do I drop it from a plane? It'll probly bounce!

BILL'S VOICE
No. You never let it out of your sight. So no one turns the key ever again. I'm sure you don't want Petey to --

HAL
DON'T say 'Petey'.

Bill breathes on the line, then --

BILL'S VOICE
It must be vanquished.

HAL
Then why don't you vanquish it?

Bill breathes on the line, then --

BILL'S VOICE
You're smaller. You go.

CLICK. The line goes dead and Hal replaces the receiver, tensing his jaw. Suddenly vigilant, he turns suddenly in case there's someone or something watching him. But there isn't.

IN THE MOTEL ROOM [MOMENTS LATER]

Hal comes in quietly, but still the door closes with a too-loud and too-heavy CLUNK. Hal looks to Petey who remains asleep, motionless. *Shouldn't that CLUNK have woken him*?

Hal goes softly over to Petey, hovering uneasily before putting an ear to Petey's nose. Faint breath. Good.

He dares to put a hand on Petey's head. A tender moment. But then he hears an **ambulance's siren** in the distance; it scares him so he pulls his hand back, puts it in his pocket.

HAL
(very soft)
Fuck.

He takes a pillow from his own bed, presses it to his face and, with as much force as he can muster --

HAL (CONT'D)
(muffled scream)
FUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUCK!

THE NEXT MORNING

Hal and Petey in their parked car, evidence of breakfast in pastel yellow and brown styrofoam boxes. Petey has his **family tree assignment** open in front of him, pencil in hand.

PETEY
Was your Aunt the one who raised you after your mom died?

HAL
Huh? Yeah. Yeah, she did.

PETEY
And I guess she doesn't have kids who can look through her stuff?
(off Hal)
Was she married?

HAL
Uncle Chip. He was a character.

PETEY
That means he was an asshole.

HAL
Hey.

PETEY
Oh, right. Your rules.
(then)
Was your Aunt nice?

HAL
She was okay. She just wasn't ever going to be my mom. And my mom... my mom was pretty cool.

It suddenly feels like Hal's said too much. And so --

HAL (CONT'D)
I'll call your mom and tell her I gotta drop you back.
(off Petey)
We'll go to Wet Willies next year, okay? I'm gonna watch you conquer those slides, if it's the last thing we do.
(that sounded wrong)
It won't be. It's just a thing people say. To show they want to do something so badly they'd use their last dying breath to... But it won't be that, either.

PETEY
I know about the adoption, Hal.

HAL
(long pause)
Is that something you want?

PETEY
Ted's okay. The trick'll be to not to learn anything about life from him. Like what it means to be a man or how to tie a tie or shave. It'll be hard cuz he's the best-selling author in the field and he'll be around me all the time, so...

They sit in silence. Hal looks away, out the window.

PETEY (CONT'D)
Can I ask you a personal question?

HAL
No.

Petey waits, and Hal closes his eyes, breathes, and --

HAL (CONT'D)
How personal?

PETEY
How'd your mom die?

HAL
(long pause)
It was an accident. You know, *
family trees are really just the
names of the people, and not all
the other stuff.

PETEY
Okay, so what was her name?

HAL
Uh... Lois. Her name was Lois.

They sit quietly for a moment.

PETEY
Can we go together to your Aunt's
house? I could help you with her
stuff and you could show me the
places where you grew up.

HAL
No. That's. No.

PETEY
I don't want to go back to Mom and
Ted early. This is supposed to be
our last time together.

HAL
It's just not a very good idea.

PETEY
If you want it can just be for my
school project... Please?

Hal looks to the highway. A car WHIZZES past and Hal winces.

HAL
Sorry. It's a no.

PETEY
If I tell you something, promise
not to tell Ted?

HAL
Okay.

PETEY
I'm scared of waterslides. I'm scared of a like, a lot, a lot of things.

HAL
Why don't you want me to tell Ted?

PETEY
Cuz that guy's not afraid of anything. It's freakin' weird.
(then)
But you're scared of a lot of stuff, aren't you, Hal?

Hal holds. He wants to say *so much stuff*, but he doesn't. He looks at Petey. Just a kid.

HAL
Okay, you can come. But in and out. I look through her things and you don't touch anything. Deal?

PETEY
Deal.

Hal twists, goes for his seatbelt. But --

PETEY (CONT'D)
Hey, Hal?

HAL
Yeah?

PETEY
It sucks my grandmother died.

Hal holds, mid-seatbelt pull.

HAL
She did? When?

PETEY
I was talking about your Mom.

HAL
Oh. Right... yeah.
(then)
It does suck.

He tries a smile. It turns out to be a pretty broken one.

HAL (CONT'D)
Okay, seatbelts.

He watches Petey pull his seatbelt across, CLICKing us to --

A FRAMED PORTRAIT OF HAL'S MOM [1958]

Same JUNIOR PRIEST, his eulogy background noise for Hal, in grief's fog as he looks at Bill who's leaning forward to study his mom's corpse, fixated like he can't figure it out.

The boys sit with **AUNT IDA** [40s, the Woman from the hornet attack and the yard sale; in 80s movie tradition, she was in old age makeup earlier] and **UNCLE CHIP** [50s, half-way between Randy Quaid in VACATION and Randy Quaid in 2021].

Their Local Maine vibe no substitute for Mom's cool fatalism, and here she is in her casket, never cooler. Aunt Ida puts a hand on Hal's; he looks at it, slides his out from under.

She looks at him, smiles kindly. Hal meets her eyes, shakes his head. *No thank you*.

There's a CREAK and Hal looks over to see Bill standing up, his hands gripping the pew in front of him. *

The Junior Priest falls silent. Everyone falls silent. *

Bill is staring at his mom, just lying there -- *

JUNIOR PRIEST *
Uh. Son. Perhaps it's best if -- *

BILL *
Shut up. *

If there was any air left in the room, it's gone now. *

BILL (CONT'D) *
Mom. *
(then) *
Wake up. *
(then) *
MOM. *
(then) *
Ha ha. Funny joke, Mom. *
(then) *
MOM. FUNNY JOKE. *

The Junior Priest has no idea what to do. Aunt Ida and Uncle Chip have no idea what to do. No one does. *

BILL (CONT'D) *
(quieter) *
Mom. Wake up. *

But then he knows she won't. And with another CREAK, he sits back down, his eyes dull on his mom just lying there. *

After a dense, terrible silence, he looks to the Priest -- *

BILL (CONT'D) *
(very quiet) *
Okay. You can keep going. *

Off Hal, his heart fully broken, we go -- *

BACK AT THEIR HOUSE [LATER] *

Bill comatose on the couch, Aunt Ida nearby, at a total loss. Hal goes upstairs where it's dark, eyes his father's closet --

UNCLE CHIP (O.S.)
Is anything the matter, Hal?

Hal startles at the sight of the strange man in an untucked shirt, black tie and boxers, holding a can of Schlitz.

UNCLE CHIP (CONT'D)
Y'aren't crying. Aren't you sad?

HAL
I'm fine.

UNCLE CHIP
That's real good. Heck maybe this is gonna be easier than we thought!
(a thoughtful pause, then)
You know, your Aunt Ida and your Uncle Chip, we never wanted kids. Preferred a life where you sit down and don't get up again 'til you want to. We're gonna do our best with you boys, but our best might be pretty bad. All right, son?

HAL
(*son*?)
All right.

UNCLE CHIP
Hey, you know'f they got pajamas round here? I forgot'a pack.

LATER THAT NIGHT

The din of a **GAME SHOW** on the downstairs TV, volume too high, the screen light the only thing on in the house. Hal comes softly out of his room, in his little black suit and --

DOWN THE STAIRS

Undetected by the back of Uncle Chip's head on the couch watching the TV. Hal tiptoes behind him, into --

THE KITCHEN

Hal goes for a cutlery drawer, takes out **the bent knife that killed Babysitter Annie** [they still *use it*?], and crosses back through the living room, unnoticed by Uncle Chip who we now see is, oddly, wearing **Hal's dad's pilot uniform**, surrounded by pyramids of **Schlitz empties** --

Hal tiptoes by, a little Danny Torrance, minus the lipstick --

IN THE BATHROOM

Hal is sitting crosslegged in the empty bathtub with The Monkey's blue box, the shower curtain pulled for secrecy.

He's got the knife poised over the lid of the box, deciding where to make an incision. He picks a spot on the cardboard, pierces it, slowly driving the blade all the way in to the hilt. He pulls it out again. There's nothing on it. No blood, no anything. He holds. And then --

A syrupy **red-black liquid** spurts from the slice in the box top, now rising up like a thick geyser, **now pouring down from the ceiling, too**, filling the tub, threatening to drown Hal!

Hal wants to cry out but --

YOUNG HAL WAKES UP WITH A START

Just a dream. His brother Bill asleep in the next bed in his funeral suit. Hal pulls aside the covers, goes over to his closet, opens it enough to see **the blue box** in there --

He reaches in, takes it out, doesn't want to open it --

ANGLE ON THE MONKEY ON THE GROUND

Just sitting there, drumsticks down, no smile, just a toy.

From above and off-camera, **a thin stream of liquid** drizzles down onto its head, soaking it, soaking its whole body --

WIDEN OUT to reveal Hal pouring **lighter fluid** all over it. He's in the neighborhood alley we saw earlier --

Content with the drenching, he lights a match, holds it --

HAL
(whispers)
It's not my fault. It was an accident. Everyone dies. That's life, and to hell with it... And you didn't do anything, either... You can't do anything... you're just a stupid toy...

He drops the match and in his tear-filled eyes we see the shifting firelight as it burns --

HAL (CONT'D)
And I hate you so much.

The Monkey writhes in the flames, twisting and crackling, its inner gears popping and splitting, its arms working, beating the drum as it writhes and twists and crackles --

A faint, high-pitched SCREAMING can be heard, the sound they say lobsters make when you boil them --

HAL (CONT'D)
Now burn, you infernal sonofawhore. *BURN*.

But none of this makes Young Hal feel any better.

A sad song plays as we slowly CROSS DISSOLVE to **--**

MOVING WITH A STUDEBAKER

Skeletal trees scrawl past in the window's reflection like Death's fingers. Hal sees an approaching sign**: The Township of Casco, Maine. Birthplace of Its Locals!**

HAL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
They moved Bill and me to Maine. And not for one minute did I think things were going to be okay...

Uncle Chip drives, Aunt Ida turned to Hal and Bill, no idea what to say. Bill stares ahead, still in his funeral suit.

The car turns down a gray street and pulls up to the house where **the yard sale and the hornets will be in 1985...**

IN AUNT IDA'S MAINE HOUSE

A chipped and gray nautical vibe: less Ralph Lauren, more Edgar Allen Poe. Taxidermy'd seabirds perched everywhere.

Nails in his lips, Uncle Chip mounts the **cuckoo clock** in the kitchen. Aunt Ida claps and Hal looks at Bill, expressionless and still wearing his little black funeral suit --

IN THEIR NEW BEDROOM IN MAINE [NIGHT]

A converted attic with two single beds, some **moving boxes.** Bill is on a bed idly turning the crank on a **Jack-In-The-Box,** still in his funeral suit. Hal unpacks a box marked 'toys' --

HAL
When you gonna take off your suit, Bill? It's getting real dirty.

BILL
(barely)
As soon as I take it off I'll have to put it back on when there's another funeral. But if I don't take it off, I won't have to put it back on, so there won't be any more funerals.

Hal is at a loss, tosses the box into the corner where it lands, clearly empty.

The brothers sit in sad silence. The Jack-In-The-Box goes **POP**, but neither of them flinches: too shocked by real life.

IN THEIR NEW ROOM [LATER THAT NIGHT]

Bill snoring, still in his suit. Hal is awake, restless --

HAL
(hushed)
Bill. Bill. You awake?

Nothing, so Hal takes a breath, braves it --

HAL (CONT'D)
I miss mom.
(then)
Do you miss her, too?
(MORE)

HAL (CONT'D)
(then)
I think about Dad sometimes, too. Do you think about Dad sometimes, too, Bill?

Bill suddenly sits straight up, eyes flashing open.

HAL (CONT'D)
Bill?

Bill's breath quickens, like the onset of a panic attack, then he clamps a hand over his own mouth, as if to stifle a scream. With the other hand he points across to --

The 'toys' box, still in the corner and, presumably, still empty. Hal's eyes go to it --

HAL (CONT'D)
What's wrong..? I already unpacked it...

Bill's muffled whimpering getting desperate, his pointing more emphatic so Hal goes to the box, extending a single finger to open the flap.

But the box is empty. Hal picks it up, turns it upside down.

HAL (CONT'D)
See? Empty.

But Bill has now clamped both of his hands over his eyes.

BILL
(whispers)
Is it in there? Is it in there?

Hal's brow knits as he rights the box on the floor, folds the flap down, holds it closed with his hand.

HAL
I'm worried about you, Bill. I guess I'm worried 'bout both of us. But I'm real, real worried about you, pacifically --

A muffled THUMP from inside the box, a single short BUMP from within, under Hal's hand holding the flap down.

Hal takes his hand off. Bill watches, terrified.

Another muffled THUMP from within.

BILL
(whispers)
Did it come back?

Hal watches the box, heart beating as a very bad feeling is dawning on him. His eyes are focused, hand shaking as he lifts the flap just enough --

To see the unmistakable **blue box** sitting inside.

HAL AND BILL'S NEW ROOM [PRE-DAWN]

The Monkey up on their desk. Bill turned away from it, eyes shifting. Clearly, the Monkey is an intense presence for him.

HAL
I'm telling you it's a bad monkey, Bill, a bad magic monkey...

BILL
And you think it got Annie, and Father Jeffries...? Then why the hell'd you bring it??

HAL
I didn't! I threw it into the garbage truck and it drove off!

BILL
Guess it bounced out, dumbshit.

HAL
It didn't! It's magic!

BILL
It doesn't move by itself, right? It's not alive, right?

HAL
Box says "like-life", so guess not?

BILL
Shut up so I can think. You think it can kill the person who turns it, or not?
(then)
You think Mom turned it?

HAL
How should I know?

Bill looks at him. Hal squirms a little.

BILL
I wish Dad was here.

Bill never says that. Hal never lets himself feel that.

BILL (CONT'D)
He'd probly know all about it, how it works and junk.

HAL
Yeah. I wish Dad was here.

BILL
I already said that, dumbshit.

Bill's back is still turned to the Monkey --

BILL (CONT'D)
Is it looking at me? Why does it feels like it's looking at me?

HAL
It's looking straight ahead.

BILL
We gotta try it, on purpose-like, see if someone else we know dies. If it's real evil we gotta blow it up. I got one cherry bomb left.

Hal looks at this brother.

HAL
No way am I ever gonna turn it.

BILL
You wouldn't, pansy. So I will.

HAL
Wait. What if it gets one of us this time?

They look at each other, as connected as they're gonna be --

BILL
Then I promise to pretend to be sad that you're dead.

HAL
(braves it)
Yeah, me too.

Bill turns, and it really does feel like it's looking at him.

He holds eye contact as he goes over. Suppressing a wistful sadness, he picks up The Monkey, turns it over, and CUT TO --

A FRAMED PORTRAIT OF UNCLE CHIP [AT HIS FUNERAL]

HAL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
The police report said 'hunting accident', but not the usual kind. He was trampled by a rare stampede of forty seven wild horses.
(then)
I overheard the undertaker say Uncle Chip came in looking like someone drop-kicked a cherry pie.

In a church, Hal and Bill in a pew in their funeral suits. Hal tries to make eye contact with Bill, but Bill's staring dully at the closed casket --

And Hal is horrified to see a small smile flickering in and out on his brother's lips.

HAL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
Getting rid of it that first time was the last thing Bill and I ever did together.

BILL AND HAL TROMPING THROUGH TALL GRASS

Still in their black funeral suits, Bill thwacks a path with a **wooden knight's sword**, almost theatrically as Hal follows with The Monkey's box, crisscrossed with a bike chain --

Bill calls back to Hal --

BILL
I don't mind so much that Uncle Chip's gone now. I mind more that I feel pretty good about it. You know?

But, no, Hal doesn't know, and stumbles a little to keep up --

A WELL NEAR AUNT IDA'S HOUSE

Overgrown and creepy. Hal and Bill looking down into its depths, their silhouettes reflected in the black water.

They hoist the Monkey's chain-wrapped box and hold; Hal looks to Bill who's smiling *so oddly* --

BILL
It's gotta be done, you know? Keep it away from people who might *really* feel pretty good about using it. Nazis and junk, you know what I mean? *

But Bill is hesitating, his hand lingering on the box.

BILL (CONT'D)
I wish Dad was here. He'd know what to do.
(then)
But he's not. So to hell with him.

Hal watches Bill reluctantly drop the box down into the well, falling a long way before DULLY smacking the water below.

Bill spits once and tromps off, leaving Hal to look down into the dark well, hypnotized by the SLOSHING of water, and --

RESUME HAL'S GREMLIN IN THE PRESENT [DRIVING/DUSK]

WHOOSH! Headlights whip past on a two line highway in the dying light. Hal winces, rudely roused from his memory.

HAL
Jesus Christ.

PETEY
Are we there yet?

HAL
Uh... Just about...

Hal squints at the darkening sky. Petey notices and looks --

PETEY
Are those vultures?

HAL
Couldn't be. There aren't vultures in Maine... I mean, are there?

PETEY
Birds are gross enough, but imagine spending your day flying around waiting for something to die.

HAL
Different strokes, I guess...

Petey spots and reads the SIGN we saw in flashback: **The Township of Casco, Maine, Birthplace of Its Locals...**

PETEY
Its *hilarious locals*.
(then)
So what's cool around here?

HAL
Well, there's a lake. Crystal Lake.

PETEY
"*Crystal Lake*"? Rip-off.

HAL
Okay but there's an old car sitting at the bottom. Legend is a kid drove out onto the ice before it was frozen, went straight down.

PETEY
Legend? What was the kid, the leader of the pack, or something?

HAL
Something like that...

Petey looks at him, sees someone distracted by fear --

PETEY
You doing okay, Hal?

HAL
Huh? Yeah.

WHOOSH! Headlights whip past and Hal grips the wheel --

HAL (CONT'D)
I'm doing great.

ESTABLISHING CASCO'S MOTEL [NIGHT]

Hal's Gremlin is the only car in the lot. Pale green, wavy **pool light** reflected in treetops surrounding a pool area. *

IN THE MOTEL OFFICE

Hal at the desk while Petey checks out local postings on a bulletin board. Hal spots a bell, DINGS it. An **UNSEEN VOICE** --

UNSEEN VOICE
(muffled, removed)
Help you?

HAL
(they're not coming out?)
Uh, one room with two beds, just for tonight. In and out.

UNSEEN VOICE
Twenty four dollars. You can just put it on the counter there.

HAL
Oh. All right.
(he does, then)
But we need a room key.

UNSEEN VOICE
(pause, then)
Do me a kind favor and... stand over there... by the door.

Unsure, Hal and Petey go stand by the door and the **MANAGER** rolls in slowly in a **wheelchair**, eyeing them warily --

MANAGER
You'll have to forgive my extreme caution here. Hate to be involved in, hah, an accident. Had a few of those this past week in town. Probly you noticed the vultures. Poorly for business, that's for double sure.

Petey heard 'accidents', too, and looks over.

PETEY
What kind of accidents?

The Manager rolls over to the rack of KEYS, careful not to touch anything, especially wary of a burbling **coffee maker.**

MANAGER
Well, son, you name it. One lady got her boiler to explode in her face. Fella I, uh, *knew*, got himself caught up in his lawnmower, supposed to be his intestines flew 100 feet in a what's it called... a *radius.*
(then)
You want ground or second floor? If you're me then I'm thinking ground floor'd be a shorter fall...

IN THEIR GROUND FLOOR MOTEL ROOM [NIGHT]

Hal at the window, curtain held back, looking out, vigilant. Petey is working on his family tree project on the bed.

PETEY
Sure seems like a lot of people die in this town. The water heater lady, the lawnmower man, the leader of the pack, your aunt...

HAL
A lot of people die everywhere. In fact everyone dies everywhere.

PETEY
And no way that dude's guts flew a hundred feet...

HAL
You working on your family tree?

Petey holds his pencil over the paper.

PETEY
So we've got you alone over here, under your parents. Lois and... do you know what your dad's name was?

The room phone RINGS. Petey and Hal look at each other. Petey moves as if to answer it, but --

HAL
(too sudden)
No, don't.
(off Petey)
Could be a pervert.

Hal picks it up, acting casual, knowing it's probably --

BILL'S VOICE (ON THE PHONE)
How does it feel to be back home?

Hal feels Petey's eyes on him, assumes a casual tone.

HAL
Yes. That's right, thank you. No, the drive in was fine, fine --

BILL'S VOICE
Petey's there with you?

HAL
Yes. So, is there a key hidden somewhere or something?

Bill breathes on the other end of the line.

BILL'S VOICE
What's that supposed to mean?

HAL
To get into, uh, the house. What did you think I meant --

BILL'S VOICE
The realtor lady will let you in. Barbara. 11AM. Don't be late.

HAL
Fine, fine, Barbara.

One of Bill's unsettling pauses, and then --

BILL'S VOICE
Long time since we saw each other. I'm not bald. Are you bald?

HAL
Ha. No, I'm not --

CLICK. Bill hangs up, leaving Hal to remember how it feels to have an asshole for a brother. Meanwhile --

BILL'S SITUATION [NIGHT / SAME MOMENT]

Sitting in the dark, silhouetted like Deep Throat, fingertips tented like a super villain. He can see down to a flight of stairs, lit by a throb of **blue TV light** from the floor above.

When he gets up and goes to a window covered with **newspaper**, we can see that he's older, of course, his cheeks thinned into a gauntness often reserved for "crazier" people.

He's wearing a **too-small, shabby black suit** that looks like it's been sewn together here and there.

And around his neck he has a **brass key** on a string.

He looks into a **viewing slit** cut out of the newspaper that covers the windows, and he sees --

HIS NEIGHBOR'S FENCED BACKYARD [NIGHT]

An **OLD WOMAN** in a soiled house dress working **a hula hoop,** leering with dementia and singing loudly to herself.

OLD WOMAN WITH BALLOON
Round and round the mulberry bush,
the monkey chased the weasel! The
monkey thought it was all in fun...
POP goes the weasel!

The woman's **ADULT SON** comes out to guide her back inside.

ADULT SON
Okay, Mom, let's try to remember
that daytime is outside play time.

Bill spots a **fly** buzzing and wants to kill it. He produces a **swatter,** lunging and swatting, but it's a fast one.

BILL
(mutters)
I'LL KILL YOU, FUCKER.

He tracks it, spots it, raises the swatter up, but then --

The fly freezes in mid-air, and falls to the ground.

Bill gets down to examine it. Yes, it's dead. His eyes go up as if to the sky, or to the second floor, an odd look on his face --

BILL (CONT'D)
(calls up)
Was that you?

He closes his hand over the key around his neck. Is he a little bit... *annoyed*?

BILL (CONT'D)
(calls up)
Cuz if it was then it seems like a
bit of a waste...

He listens to the quiet of the house.

CRYSTAL LAKE AT SUNRISE

TRANQUIL LAPPING of WATER at the shore, goddamn idyllic in the morning. A blanket of mist on the water separates to reveal a **dingy boat** in the center, Petey alone inside.

And Hal is wading in to the water from the shore, trying to move quickly, but now he's up to his waist.

HAL
(calls out)
Hey! Be careful out there!

Petey looks over the side of the boat at the water's glassy surface, flies skimming it. Transfixed by LAPPING water on the hull, Petey sees deep into the cold black water, to the wreck of a **Model T Ford**, a glimmer of sun off its headlights.

HAL (CONT'D)
(calls out)
No!! Don't look!!

One glimmer, two glimmers... three glimmers... and --

A Jason Vorhees-esque purple-pale, **DEFORMED BOY** in a leather jacket bursts from the water to pull Petey down with him!

LEATHER JACKET JASON VORHEES
(gargles)
Leader of the paaaaaaaack!

Now up to his neck, Hal shrieks in his BOYHOOD VOICE, and --

IN THE MOTEL ROOM [MORNING]

Hal wakes with a GASP. He looks around the room. *Where the hell am I*? And, more importantly, *where the hell is* --

HAL
Petey?

Petey's not in the room. Hal gets out of bed, quickly goes over to the bathroom, looks in. Petey's not there, either.

HAL (CONT'D)
Fuck.

He rushes to the window, looks out at the pool. No one there.

HAL (CONT'D)
Fuck fuck fuck FUCK.

He casts around the room, grabbing his car keys, rushing to the door and pulling it open to reveal --

Petey, safe and sound and holding some vacation pamphlets that he scored in the lobby, like kids have always done.

PETEY
There's a boomerang museum outside of Hartford. When you leave, do you think they say "come back soon", or is it implied?

Petey moves past Hal into the room. Hal closes his eyes with relief, lets himself breathe while he's at it.

HAL
Ha. That's funny. You're funny.

PETEY
Maybe it'll make up for how scrawny I am. But Ted's muscular so maybe I'll end up muscular, too. Like it goes with pets and their owners, cuz they're always together, kinda just start to look the same. Was your dad muscular?
(looks Hal over)
Nah, probly scrawny like we are.

Hal heard *like we are* and tries a smile. Doesn't last long.

LATER THAT MORNING

Vultures circle in the sky over the town of Casco.

Hal drives through town. More sad than quaint, especially with no cars on the road, no one walking around.

Hal eyes houses as they pass them: **TOWNSPEOPLE** grimly watch through screen doors. Some windows boarded up.

HAL
I definitely don't remember it being so empty...

A WOMAN watering her roses sees them approaching in the Gremlin, drops her hose, trots away.

PETEY
It's like an episode of "The Twilight Zone" around here, and the twist is it turns out hiding in your house is normal and driving around is only what monsters do...

At a four-way stop, Hal looks down a street to the left; it has meaning for him. He grips the wheel, doesn't go further.

HAL
Aunt Ida's house is just up there.

He looks up at the **vultures**, still circling.

Petey notes a **Victorian mega-dump** of a house, barred windows covered with newspaper from the inside; a strange fortress.

Petey sees in the front yard of the house next door to it: the OLD WOMAN in the soiled housedress Bill watched earlier. Here, she's working her **hula hoop**, a greedy grin on her face.

Of course this makes the Victorian mega-dump **BILL'S HOUSE**, even if Hal and Petey don't know it yet. But, for our sake --

FROM INSIDE BILL'S HOUSE

Through a slit in the newspaper on the windows we can see Hal's Gremlin stopped at the stop sign.

RESUME IN THE CAR

Hal is watching the vultures --

HAL
Okay, well, here goes nothing.

He's still looking up when he rolls into the intersection... and they're almost T-Boned by a car blowing through!

PETEY
Holy shit!

HAL (CONT'D)
Holy shit!

They look at each other, startled.

PETEY
You okay?

HAL (CONT'D)
You okay?

PETEY
Yeah.

HAL (CONT'D)
Yeah.

They watch each other for a moment. Then --

PETEY
Jinx.

HAL (CONT'D)
Jinx.

In spite of their brush with you-know-what, they smile. Hal is aware of feeling something deep for his kid, and his smile is the first to slip.

AT AUNT IDA'S HOUSE

Hal's Gremlin pulls up. A **red foreclosure sign** in the lawn, a **red station wagon** at the curb, and **BARBARA in a red pants suit** with a **red folder.** She waves them in with enthusiasm.

PETEY
Look: a monster, like us.

HAL
Do me a favor and... wait in the car while I deal with this.

PETEY
What? No way. I wanna see your old room, like they do in movies.

HAL
No.

PETEY
Why not?

HAL
Because I say so.

PETEY
Your rules?

HAL
That's right.

Petey looks at him. Hal will have to do better than that.

PETEY
Fine. Then I have to go Number 2.

HAL
Why didn't you go at the motel?

PETEY
There's a lot you and I don't know about each other. One of those things is I'm one of those kids who can only go poo in a house.

HAL
Your mom never said anything about this. And what were we going to do at the waterslide park?

PETEY
You were gonna have to knock on some doors, I dunno, you're supposed be the parent.

Hal can't tell if this serious, and now the lady is tapping on the window with red fingernails, smiling past red lips --

HAL
Fine. But don't touch anything.
(then, rolls window down)
Hello there...

RED PANTS SUIT
(offers a business card)
I'm Barbara you must be Hal Shelborn! Your brother Bill Shelborn said you'd be coming!

HAL
(shit)
Ah, right, right. Barbara, yes.

BARBARA
That brother Bill of yours is quite the character, isn't he?

HAL
Quite a character.

BARBARA
And I believe he lives nearby, doesn't he?

HAL
He does? I mean, no, I don't think--

Hal looks back at Petey, obviously has some explaining to --

BARBARA
(sees Petey)
And who is this little slugger?

HAL
This is my son, Petey.

She offers Petey a business card, too.

PETEY
No thanks, Barbara. I'm just a kid. But I didn't know I have an uncle, so yes thanks for that.
(MORE)

PETEY (CONT'D)
It’s funny cuz I actually asked Hal here if he had any siblings yesterday, but he flat out lied to my face. I guess he just really doesn’t want me to know anything about him. But it’s cool, he’s only going to be my dad for like a few more days anyway.

Barbara looks at her business card awkwardly, stiffly fits it back into her jacket pocket. Hal turns to Petey, not happy --

ACROSS THE STREET [SAME MOMENT]

Thrasher rolls by on his skateboard, checking out Hal and Petey as they get out of their conspicuous yellow Gremlin with Connecticut plates.

He watches Barbara, Hal and Petey go up to the house. Petey feels him looking and glances back.

Thrasher holds slack-jawed eye contact as he rolls on. Petey watches him go, slips on his Walkman headphones.

A FRAMED YEARBOOK PICTURE OF BILL [FROM 1958]

Not at his funeral, but on a wall in Aunt Ida’s house.

Petey [listening to his Walkman] looks at his unknown uncle, * and then the picture next to it**: Bill’s Army portrait** [early 20s and 70% more WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT KEVIN, a combination of scared and angry in his eyes].

ELSEWHERE IN THE HOUSE

Barbara opens a closet for Hal to peer into its shadows, standing back like it’s a murder scene.

BARBARA
Were you and your Aunt very close?

HAL
Sure, very. Is this everything?

Doesn’t look like The Monkey’s blue box is in here.

BARBARA
Well, there’s the closets we saw, and the closet upstairs...
(then)
(MORE)

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Of course she had the yard sale the day before she died. Strange when you're something real normal and All-American one day, and the next day you're attacked by Asian bugs...
(then)
Let's see, that would have been Sunday, of course, and your Aunt got a nice turnout. Must have made a hundred dollars. But then, oh, Lord, first thing Tuesday was Mitch McDonald...

We see a quick flash of --

A SUBURBAN TABLEAU [TUESDAY]

Sunny blue skies over a parked and PURRING **lawnmower** in the middle of a green grass yard, a pair of man's legs sticking out from under it, blood seeping through from inside its canvas grass-collection bag.

The lawnmower SPUTTERS and COUGHS as it "digests" --

BARBARA
(over)
And then Wednesday it was Marjorie Greene...

ON A GOLF COURSE [WEDNESDAY]

Marjorie Greene sinks a putt, goes to the hole - but a **cobra** strikes straight out from it, affixing itself to her throat, rivulets of black venom all over her golf whites!

HAL (OVER)
But, there aren't cobras in Maine. I mean... are there?

RESUME HAL AND BARBARA IN THE PRESENT

BARBARA
Well, there was one.
(then)
Oh and God bless you, there aren't any oriental hornets, either. But here we are.

HAL
And that all happened last week?

BARBARA
Every day starting Monday, at least one good citizen just... poof. Some days two or three good citizens.

Hal lowers his voice --

HAL
Did you happen to see if my Aunt had a... wind-up, uh, toy monkey at the yard sale?

BARBARA
Don't think so, oh but not a cherished childhood memory I hope?

She looks at him, genuinely concerned. From the kitchen, Hal hears the familiar **Cuckoo.**

HAL
Let's go see that upstairs closet.

IN AUNT IDA'S KITCHEN [SAME MOMENT]

Petey watches the **cuckoo clock** over the table, his music loud in headphones, the bird MUTELY doing its thing --

Checks the fridge: vitamins, prune juice, old people stuff. Closes the door, sees a snapshot of Uncle Chip with a gun --

UPSTAIRS IN AUNT IDA'S HOUSE [SAME MOMENT]

Cuckoo. Barbara and Hal at the closet where Aunt Ida found the Monkey's box. Hal stands back... but the knob is locked.

BARBARA
Hm. That's odd. I don't remember locking anything --

Hal tenses as she fans out the ring of keys, tries one. Nope.

HAL
You said my brother lives nearby?

BARBARA
I thought so but I'm new in the office and I'd have to check the...

She tries another key. **Cuckoo.** Still nope. She fans out keys. And as she does, Hal swears he can hear --

The faintest rhythmic **TTRATTT TTRATTT TTRATTT** --

On the other side of the closet door. He holds his breath --

HAL
Uh. Do you hear that sound?

She holds, listens, hears the rhythmic sound --

BARBARA
Well, yes, now I do --

She feels the beat, now doing a ridiculous little shimmy to it, smiling at Hal in that way that Realtors do --

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Kinda makes you wanna move.

But Hal is just looking at the door, and tensing up --

HAL
(tightly)
How are we doing with that key?

IN AUNT IDA'S KITCHEN [SAME MOMENT]

Music in his headphones, Petey sees an **urn** holding Uncle Chip, engraved *Free As A Bird* and surrounded by taxidermy.

Petey scoffs, says too loud to himself --

PETEY
(over music)
YEAH RIGHT FREE LIKE THE REST OF MY DEAD RELATIVES.

WITH HAL AND BARBARA

Hal heard Petey faintly downstairs and turned his head, Barbara still trying, and failing with, another key.

HAL
Maybe you could let me try --

BARBARA
No, no, no. Anything worth starting is worth seeing through to the end.

TTRAT TRATT TRATT behind the door as Hal looks back at it --

Barbara tries a key; it finds purchase in the lock, CLICKS.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Praise the lord, here we go...

Barbara opens the closet door and Hal catches a brief glimpse of **The Monkey's blue box** just as --

As an enormous double-barreled shotgun slips from a shelf, lands flat on the butt, twin hammers cocking on impact as it hinges forward under its own weight and --

KA - BLAMMO!

DOWNSTAIRS

Petey didn't hear it, but he felt it. Peeling back a headphone at the base of the stairs, he looks up to see **one of Barbara's business cards** fluttering down, straight into his hand, a little singed along one of its edges. **Cuckoo.**

UPSTAIRS

Hal is frozen stiff, Barbara's red folder now somehow in his hands. And plenty of Barbara on his shirt, on his face.

PETEY (OFF)
(calls up)
Everything okay up there...?

Hal quickly fishes a piece of Barbara out of his mouth, and --

HAL
(calls down, voice cracks)
Everything's great..!

PETEY
(calls up)
Are you lying again?

Hal peers past shotgun smoke and into the closet...

Sees The Monkey's blue box. He carefully reaches for it, even more carefully slips the top off --

But the Monkey is NOT IN THERE.

HAL
Fuck.

We stay on Hal, and unexpectedly hear **ADULT BILL'S VOICE:**

BILL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
I knew it was all wrong. I knew *we* were all wrong...

OFF Hal's worried eyes, we CROSS DISSOLVE to --

FROM THE BOTTOM OF A WELL [1958]

Looking up to Bill and Hal silhouetted in the well's mouth.

Bill's silhouette turns away from the well, leaving Hal --

And now we go with Bill, and we see him toss his sword into the brush, his eyes shifting as he --

Secretly closes his hand over **The Monkey's key** --

ANGLE ON Bill's black dress shoes as he traipses away from Hal through grass --

BILL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
The moment you slipped from my fingers, as if it was me who had been hurled down into dark, buried in limbo, dead but not dead...

In a SLOW DISSOLVE, we stay on Bill's black dress shoes --

As day turns to night, and Bill's black dress shoes have now turned around, going back in the direction they came --

BILL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
Forced to wander the Earth, seeing you everywhere, and nowhere.....

AT THE WELL

Bill returns, alone, still dressed in his little black funeral suit, his face now painted black, too. He has a rope over his arm --

Now looking up again from the bottom of the well, Bill **spelunks** down into its depths, shining a flashlight into the dry muck at the bottom. But --

There's no blue box... No Monkey.

At the surface, Bill nails a thick wooden cover onto the well, eyes intense and furious, hammering us TO BLACK, and --

Again we are following Bill's black dress shoes --

*Please note: **Bill's Tale** that follows here is a centerpiece in our movie that reveres a Zemeckis vibe, deliberately referencing movies with a "crazed loner", the idea is to duplicate the look of those films and characters, creating something like the "Forest Gump of crazed loners"...*

Staying with Bill's black dress shoes as we now DISSOLVE TO --

BILL'S ARMY BOOTS [1968]

Cutting through tall grasses, and now TILTING UP to dirty-faced **BILL AT AGE 24**, in Army fatigues. It's 10 years later, he's in --

VIETNAM [1968]

This is the Bill we saw on Aunt Ida's wall, fear and anger in his eyes, **the Monkey's key** on a chain around his neck --

BILL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
I found myself searching for some sign that the power I'd felt churning inside of you was real...

His M-16 held out to the wet jungle, blinking through sweat at dozens of **Monkey faces** leering out at him from bushes.

BILL AS TRAVIS BICKLE [1976]

Wearing an army jacket and cowboy shirt in a MOVIE THEATER.

BILL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
That I wasn't alone, some sad loner... But that I was special... that you had chosen me and only me to bear witness...

He notices the **MOVIE THEATER STAFF** wear **little red vests**, and the USHER coming down the aisle, backlit by the flickering screen light is also wearing **the face of The Monkey!**

BILL IN HIS TRAVIS BICKLE SHITTY APARTMENT [1976]

Bill goes to an **army footlocker** under his wiry bed, digs for a folded red bandana, inside of which is **The Monkey's key**, and **a piece of notebook paper**, written on it in red, in a circle as it was on the box's bottom: **1 3 0 3 3 0 1 0 1 3**

BILL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
To behold the flaming sword of your righteousness as it cut through the air... Smiting anyone and everyone, the ones who deserved it, and the ones who didn't, and everyone in between.
(then)
That is, if you really are "like life" after all... *

AT HIS MIRROR [1976] *

Bill shaves to clean himself up, eyes intense.

BILL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
... then I say *kill 'em all*.

He looks at **the piece of notebook paper with the number from The Monkey's box on it**, fixed to the mirror.

And for the first time he sees that it's a **phone number** --

He goes for his phone, holding up to read the number off the paper while rotary-dialing --

A PHONE RINGS [1976]

On a table in **a darkened house.** The camera pulls back through one the house's window to reveal that the phone is inside --

THE VICTORIAN MEGA-DUMP IN MAINE [1976]

Shabby, overgrown and with a **FOR SALE** sign in the grass.

Bill pulls the FOR SALE sign up and out, looking to the neighbor's yard where our friend the OLD WOMAN in the soiled housedress is banging on a marching band drum with a mallet.

BILL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
Brutally random, but not random at all...

Bill can't believe where he is, looks down the block and --

FROM BLACK, A CLOSET DOOR OPENS [1976]

Revealing Bill, an adult in **burglar's black and black face paint**, unpacking the closet, pulling out box after box but The Monkey's box isn't there --

BILL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
I'd've happily spent my whole life searching...

But Bill does find **his little black funeral suit**, holds it up to himself. Way too small for him as an adult, *unless*...

IN THE MEGA DUMP VICTORIAN MANSION [BILL'S HOUSE, 1976]

Panning off the newspaper'd and barred windows that we know to be in his Victorian house, finding Bill with the little black funeral suit at a sewing machine.

He's re-tailoring the suit to fit him as an adult --

BILL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
Foolishly believing that I could make you appear to me, that it was *I* who could ever hope to find *you* again...

As if sensing something, or wanting to sense something, he looks over his shoulder at a closed closet door --

THE CLOSET DOOR OPENS [1976 - 1985]

Bill expectantly looking in, wearing **his little black funeral suit**, sewn together again with nearly-matching black felt to help make the arms and legs long enough, etc.

He doesn't see what he's hoping to see in the closet, closes the door again.

After a moment of BLACK, he opens it again, doesn't see what he hopes to see, closes it again.

Every time he closes the door to **BLACK** we superimpose a date, starting with **1976** and going up to **1985** --

Bill has been opening his closet door compulsively, looking for The Monkey for the past decade --

BILL [AS AN ADULT] (V.O.)
Never allowing myself the fragile hope that *you* who would want to come back and want to be with *me*...

Now back at the table where he was sewing, Bill wields scissors as he cuts **ads for yard sales** out of newspapers, adding them to a vast collection pinned to a wall --

He feels the sudden urge to look at the closet door again, trying to resist getting up to open it again --

He can't resist. But the closet is still empty.

He closes it one final time TO BLACK, and -- *

RESUME AUNT IDA'S KITCHEN IN OUR 1985 PRESENT [LATER] *

Hal and Petey stand with blankets on their shoulders, Hal holding The Monkey's blue box and talking to a **LADY POLICE OFFICER** taking notes. *

POLICE OFFICER
And you were just standing there, hands to yourself, is that right?

HAL
That's right. She opened the --

POLICE OFFICER
You knew there was a gun in the house?

HAL
Well, no. My Uncle Chip always had guns, but...

POLICE OFFICER
And this "Uncle Chip", as you refer to him?

HAL
He's deceased. A long time ago. A hunting accident...

POLICE OFFICER
(looks at him)
I'm starting to pick up on a pattern here, sir.

HAL
No, it wasn't --

POLICE OFFICER
You informed me that this is your aunt's residence, is that correct?

HAL
Yes. Well, she passed recently. This past Monday I guess.

POLICE OFFICER
Oh yeah? Which one was she?

HAL
She was the hornet stings.

Hal side-eyes Petey. *We'll talk about it later.*

POLICE OFFICER
Oh, yeah. That one.
(then)
You know, from where I'm standing, sir, you got a lot of dead people around you. Too many, maybe.

HAL
Doesn't... everyone have a lot of dead people around them? I mean, that's life, right?

POLICE OFFICER
Not these kinds of deads. Sir, I'm going to ask you don't leave town until we have a chance to figure a few things out.

HAL
I'm sorry, officer, but I promised my son here I'd take him to Wet Willie's, and...

PETEY
Actually, officer, we moved off of going to Wet Willie's. This is obviously more important. And very suspicious.

POLICE OFFICER
Smart kid. Find a motel. I'd say stay here, but it's a goddamn mess upstairs.

The cops jots in her notebook. Hal turns to Petey --

HAL
You okay?

Petey looks at him. *

PETEY *
I'll wait in the car. That's your * favorite thing for me to do anyway, * isn't it? To just stay away? *

Petey goes out of the kitchen. Hal looks to the COP, who's been watching that whole awkward thing. Hal shrugs at her. *

HAL
Teenagers.
(then)
Wait, is he... how old is he? Yeah.
(re-shrugs)
Teenagers.

The cop assesses him: *guy doesn't know how old his kid is*.

OUTSIDE / ACROSS THE STREET [SAME MOMENT]

In with a smattering of RUBBERNECKING NEIGHBORS lit by intermittent, silent siren lights, Thrasher tracks Petey going back to the car, police blanket over his shoulders.

Thrasher gets on his skateboard, kicks off -- *

IN AUNT IDA'S KITCHEN [SOMETIME LATER]

The police activity has died down, the goddamn cuckoo clock still TICKING as Hal looks in cupboards. He looks in drawers. Big knives and things, all a little scary now. * * *

He's got the blue box on the counter wit him. But no Monkey -- *

The phone rings LOUDLY. Hal jumps, pauses, picks it up --

HAL
Hello?

BILL'S VOICE
Hal Shelborn, please. If he's... available.

HAL
Bill?

BILL'S VOICE
You're all right. Thank goodness. And Petey? Is he... available, too.

HAL
Yes. We're fine. Listen. The box is here, but it's empty. The Monkey is out. And Aunt Ida had a goddamn yard sale, the thing could be anywhere, with anyone.

BILL'S VOICE
(strange pause)
That's not good. That's bad.

HAL
There's all kinds of shit happening in town. Lots of people dying, not in normal ways. There's vultures.

BILL'S VOICE
How long will you be there?

HAL
The police told me not to leave --

BILL'S VOICE
Go to the motel, await my signal.

HAL
YOUR FUCKING SIGNAL?? WHERE ARE YOU? ARE YOU --

CLICK. Dial tone. Hal slams the phone, stress rising, staring at nothing until he realizes he's looking right at --

The **local Yellow Pages.** He takes it, opens it, skims to **S**, to **SH...** Sheila, Shein, Sheldon. No **Shelborns** listed in town.

Feeling a little dumb, he skims to **M**, follows his finger down to the **MO**s... Modor, Moffet, Moleman, Momson, Monet...

Hal stops at **Monkey, Mrs**.

No address, but a phone number [**the same one on The Monkey's box, the one that Bill dialed in "Bill's Tale"**] --

HAL (CONT'D)
Mrs...?

Hal dials the number. It rings, and rings, until CLICK and --

BILL'S ANSWERING MACHINE
Sorry we can't come to the phone right now but leave a message after the [BEEEEEP].

What the fuck...? "We"?

HAL
(into phone, barely)
Uh... Bill...?

Hal stops himself, holds the receiver away from his mouth --

BILL'S HOUSE

Bill watches his answering machine, hears Hal hang up.

Still seen only in the dark in the present, he unhurriedly turns and goes for the stairs to the second floor, the dim **pulsating blue light** above, walking almost *ceremoniously* --

UPSTAIRS

The **shifting blue light** is coming from a room at the end of a hall, from which we can also hear a dozen or so **COMPETING TV SETS**, volume low. There is enough ambient light from that room to see that the hall is crowded with **blue boxes** of every shape and shade, square, round, all stacked in staggered configurations like a **Q*bert world...**

Soon Bill appears at the top of the stairs, ceremoniously going for the room with the 1980s blue light --

IN THE BLUE LIGHT ROOM [CONTINUOUS]

The unseen, overlapping TVs are in here, volumes low [the unmistakeable old MTV theme, etc], and we are looking at --

Bill, standing outside the room in the flickering glow of **TV light**, front-lit in cold blue like someone beholding science-fiction, **the Monkey's key around his neck.**

And we reverse to see --

THE MONKEY'S "THRONE ROOM"

It's a very large room, empty of all furniture, only --

A huge **"Q*bert"-esque pyramid** of **boxes of various shades of blue**, and **television sets,** the tint on their screens turned all the way **blue.** Very 80s, very cold, and oddly beautiful.

And perched on top, **The Monkey**, lit blue from under like a ghoul. Deadpan expression, drumstick on drum. Ready to rock.

Bill comes in, gets up on a step-stool, gently takes The Monkey down, looking into its eyes. This is intense for him.

He takes the key in his fingers, still on the string around his neck, so it's real intimate when it goes into the slit in the red vest, finds purchase in the hole --

BILL
In your infinite wisdom, I trust your flaming sword of righteousness will cut the foul air and smite the right person.

Bill's eyes close as he CRANKs it once with confidence, a second CRANK with his teeth set. There's a little bit of an ecstasy there. Just a little... *rapture*.

GEARS GRINDING as the grin forms, arm going up and holding --

Bill tries to hide his impatience, through gritted teeth --

BILL (CONT'D)
(tightly)
Fine. Take your time. I don't mind. I've got the whole of Eternity to wait... don't I...

The DOORBELL rings [like Buffalo Bill's underground BELL, shrill and startling] and Bill can't hide his annoyance. He goes to an **intercom box** on the wall --

BILL (CONT'D)
Yes?

THRASHER (OVER INTERCOM)
Uh. It's Ricky.

BILL
Yes? What? I'm extremely busy.

INTERCUT WITH

AT THE BACK DOOR TO BILL'S HOUSE

Thrasher [Ricky] standing at an outside **intercom box.**

THRASHER
Uh.

BILL
Speak, cretin, speak.

THRASHER
Oh. Yeah. Uh.

BILL
Did you see my brother?

THRASHER
Oh that's your brother. Rad. So then that's your nephew, huh.

BILL
Don't hurt yourself thinking so hard. Is he bald?

THRASHER
I don't think either of them is. Why?

BILL
(a strange, long pause)
Did you know twenty-seven percent of all English speaking people will say either "holy shit" or "oh, shit" before they die?
(Thrasher did not know that)
It's funny because death is the one thing that's going to happen to all of us... well, almost all of us... but still it comes as a surprise. And don't you think people would do well to have something prepared that they want to say, to *utter*? Famous last words. A bit of Shakespeare. Or a battle cry like *Geronimo*, *kamikaze*, and so forth.

THRASHER
(the fuck?)
Right on.
(then)
So, anyway, this sounds weird but I was wondering if I could give you the fifteen bucks back and instead just keep the, uh the Monkey toy thing?

More weird Bill silence, and then --

BILL
It's not a toy. Don't ever call it that.

Thrasher felt like he knew that.

THRASHER
Oh. Okay cool. Sorry.
(then)
So, do you think I can get it back?

A strange pause on Bill's side, and then --

BILL
Never.

In Bill's hands, The Monkey brings down the drumstick. **TRRATTT.** And again, **TTRAATTTTT.** And again. Bill smiles --

BILL (CONT'D)
And, Ricky, you might start thinking about your famous last words. Just in case.

CLICK. Bill clicks the intercom off, expectantly watching The Monkey hit the drum over and over again --

Outside, Thrasher tries a tug on the door knob, but it's good and locked. He stoops down to the rubber curtain on the doggy door, angling his body to see if he might fit. No go.

He examines the bars on the downstairs windows. They aren't coming off easily. He looks up at the shadowy house, all of the windows barred. And he's got to get in there.

He backs away, hops onto his skateboard, and --

OUTSIDE AUNT IDA'S HOUSE

Hal comes out of the house, carrying The Monkey's blue box.

He goes to Petey waiting in the car. He opens the trunk, puts the blue box in there.

But at the driver's side door, it's locked. He waits for Petey to unlock it. Petey doesn't move. Hal knocks on the window. Petey holds, then finally reaches over to unlock it. Hal slides in.

HAL
Listen, I'm going to take you back to your mom. I'll tell her what happened today and she'll think I'm not safe to be around. And she'll be right.

PETEY
So Ted will adopt me and you won't have to see me anymore?

Hal considers his response --

HAL
I'm really glad you have Ted in your life. He's a pro, he's a --

PETEY
But I don't want a pro. I want my real dad.

HAL
You never called me that before.

PETEY
Because if a tree falls in a forest and there's no one there to hear it, then of course NO it doesn't make a sound. And even if it does, who gives a flying shit if there's no one there anyway?!?

HAL
Hey. Language.

PETEY
HEY FUCK YOU!

Hal freezes, puts his hands on the steering wheel. Nothing more to say right now so he starts the ignition and --

As Hal's yellow Gremlin pulls away from the curb, we see --

Thrasher on his skateboard, holding onto the rear bumper, letting the car pull him along behind them --

Hal's Gremlin drives down the street, goes a few blocks with Thrasher attached --

The car takes a curve and Thrasher lets go, zipping off with good speed and continuing on straight, going quite fast, the wind whipping his hair back so we can see his eyes --

Going so fast that Thrasher doesn't see **the squirrel** that's darting across the road --

Flattening its skull as he speeds right over it, registering the death with nothing more than a slight lift of his board --

But the wind whipping his hair back is still revealing his eyes, and we can see that they're sad --

THRASHER
Fuck.

AT THRASHER'S "HOUSE" *

Pretty shabby. Thrasher pulls up, pops his skateboard into his hand and goes -- *

INSIDE *

Walmart portraits on the wall tell us he lives with **HIS MOM,** a woman with the exact same hairstyle who only sort of keeps her cigarettes out of the pictures. *

AT THRASHER'S CLOSET

He opens the flimsy accordion doors, finds a **plastic-wrapped Policeman's uniform, replete with hat.** There's hurt in his eyes, but it's quickly masked with anger.

THRASHER
Lousy deadbeat.

He looks to the shelf for **a shoebox**, feels its weight before opening it, not letting himself linger on **the Polaroids of a boy and his father**, or **the old baseball**, or **the police badge.**

He only cares about **the service revolver.**

THE MOTEL [LATER] *

Hal and Petey get out of the car, not speaking. Petey heads straight in the direction of their room, but Hal slows when he notices a pool pole stuck high in a treetop lit by the wavy pool light. ***Didn't it used to be pale green light***? *

But now the wavy light in the trees is **deep red.** *

In another red-lit treetop, Hal spots a bent wheelchair wheel. He tenses. This feels bad. He slowly turns around to look up into -- *

A third red-lit treetop, and **the severed head of the Motel Manager**, hanging upside down like a Christmas ornament and grinning grimly. *

Hal jumps at the sight, looks away from it. *

HAL *
Goddamn it, Bill, what the fuck are you doing? *

IN THEIR MOTEL ROOM

Hal comes in. Petey must already be in the bathroom. Hal tries the handle. It's locked.

HAL
Petey?
(silence, and so)
Well. I'm here if you need me.

He hears Petey turn on the sink and so he sneaks quickly to the phone, taking out **a torn Yellow Pages page**, dials --

It rings and rings and Hal cups the receiver, looks back to the bathroom door, is about to call out to Petey when --

BILL'S VOICE
(picks up)
Yes?

HAL
(hushed into phone)
It's me. I know you have it and I know you're in town.
(off Bill's silence)
Mrs. Monkey...??

BILL'S VOICE
I know you are but what am I?

INTERCUT WITH **THE "THRONE ROOM"**, Bill watching The Monkey, its arm raised, grinning.

HAL
Stop turning the key!

BILL
Well, no. It can't reach back there by itself, so someone has to.

HAL
Why?? These are innocent people!

BILL
You ought to call the police.

HAL
And tell them there's an evil Monkey that kills people?

BILL
Only if someone turns the key, Hal. Guns don't kill people, either.

HAL
Listen... I don't care what happens to me, all that matters is that Petey is safe. So stop turning it.

BILL
The person who turns the key doesn't die. You've known that since we were kids. Since the day Mom died. Haven't you, Hal?

HAL
What? What are you talking about?

BILL
I'll stop turning it, but only if you bring Petey here so he can do it instead.

HAL
What? NO. Why?

BILL
You want Petey to be safe, so all Petey has to do is turn the key, and keep turning the key, and Petey'll never die.

HAL
That's crazy. Bill --

BILL
Out of everyone in the world, *we* were chosen to know His power over life and death with Him.

HAL
Him??

BILL
Yes. Him. With a capital 'H'.
(then)
Don't you see? The Monkey is God.

HAL
Bill. Stop.

BILL
I won't stop. But I will give you the choice: I keep turning it, or Petey keeps turning it.
(off Hal)
(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)
One of the Shelborn boys is gonna live forever, dumbshit. And it isn't gonna be you.

HAL
Hold on. Is that a threat?

BILL
Maybe.

Bill has been watching the Monkey, his eyes now sharpening when its GEARS GRIND and the drumstick comes down: **TTTRATTT.**

Hal hears the **TTTRAAATTT** on his end of the line --

HAL
Hey. Did it just --

In both of their places, **the lights dim** and come back again. Both Hal and Bill freeze, listening with their eyes, until --

HAL (CONT'D)
Bill? Bill are you there?

BILL
(pause)
You're alive. Petey, too, I hope.

Hal looks quickly back to the closed bathroom door --

HAL
Listen. Let me get Petey out of here, and then we'll talk. We'll figure out what do to.

BILL
No. Choose.

CLICK. Bill hangs up, leaving Hal with the closed bathroom door. Worry gnawing at him now --

HAL
Petey?
(only running water)
Petey?

Hal goes to the bathroom, knocks. Nothing. And it's locked.

HAL (CONT'D)
I think I better just take you back to your mom, like right now...

In the stillness Hal hears only the running water, and --

HAL (CONT'D)
PETEY. LET'S GO.

Hal's panicked eyes shift, and in his mind he sees --

IN THE BATHROOM

Petey standing in bathtub water up to his shins, holding a **blowdryer** and staring at us with no expression.

PETEY
Thanks a lot, Hal.

The blowdryer slips from his fingers, and --

HAL (OFF)
DON'T!

IN THE MOTEL ROOM [RESUME REALITY]

Hal yanks hard on the stiff knob. No go, so he backs up from the door, preparing to ram it with his shoulder when --

CLICK the door opens and Petey appears, sullen but unharmed.

HAL *
Petey, thank god... *

PETEY
Jesus don't have a heart attack.
(then)
Or do, I don't care. Not like you want to be in my life anyway, so it might just be quicker. *

Hal is speechless -- *

PETEY (CONT'D)
Why have a kid if all you're going to do is stay away from me? What am I supposed to think about myself?

That strikes Hal. An echo of what his mom said about him and Bill when they were kids and their father left. *

HAL
Your mom and I were young. I didn't even know exactly what I was doing.

PETEY
So... I was an accident?

HAL
Petey. Everything's an accident.

PETEY
Nice one. Good to hear.

HAL
But you're not a mistake.
(then)
And I'm so happy you're here. And you're precious to me.

Hal can feel an unfamiliar feeling rising up in his chest. Like a trap door opening. He tries to hold it back down.

HAL (CONT'D)
But it's also why I stay away. Because I bring along with me all kinds of weird baggage that I don't want you to have to deal with.

PETEY
Like what?? Hunting accidents?? Killer hornets??

Hal looks at his son for a long moment.

HAL
Yeah. And boomerang aneurysms.

There's that unfamiliar feeling again.

Let's call it... vulnerability. And Petey can feel it.

PETEY
What's a boomerang aneurysm?

HAL
It's what...
(long pause)
It's what my mom --

And just then, a KNOCK on the door. From outside --

VOICE
Uh. Open up. It's the police.

Hal and Petey share a pause. Hal isn't rushing for the door.

A louder KNOCK, and --

VOICE (CONT'D)
Police. Open the goddamn door.

Hal goes to the door, looks through the peephole: a **POLICE OFFICER** in uniform and hat, so Hal opens the door and --

Thrasher pushes his way in, gun drawn and pointed!

And we see how badly the uniform fits, hat high on his head, bangs sticking out... but still scary --

HAL
(defensive, backing up)
Hey, hey, hey!

THRASHER
Shut up, go over there. Sit down. With the kid. Hands up or I blast your faces off.

Hal and Petey sit, hands up, terrified of this intrusion.

THRASHER (CONT'D)
You're like under arrest.

HAL
Wait, we didn't do anything...

THRASHER
Yeah, okay. So, no. Get your keys. Come on, get 'em...
(then)
We're going for a drive...

Hal looks to Petey, real fear in the kid's eyes. Meanwhile...

IN THE MONKEY'S "THRONE ROOM"

Bill looking through a viewing slit in a newspaper'd window, the lights in his house dimming on and off, because --

SHRIEKING NEIGHBOR (OFF)
Oh God, Tracy! How'd Mother get out again and where'd she get a goddamn kite?!

Through the slit we see down into the neighbor's yard where **THE NEIGHBORS** are WAILING and gesturing upwards at --

A **tangled kite** in the **power lines**, string tied to the wrist of a **BLACKENED CORPSE:** the Old Lady in the soiled housedress.

The kite sways restlessly in a rising wind that gusts and takes the kite up, corpse's arm with it, breaking it off.

NEIGHBOR
(shrieks)
Oh, God, Mother! No!

Bill's eyes shift, and in a brief vignette we see --

IN HAL AND BILL'S MOM'S KITCHEN [1958]

Revisiting the memory of Bill finding his Mom at the sink, bracing the countertop, head down, eyes closed.

BILL
You're not even cooking it yet??

Her hand with the icing bag goes up, drifts to her forehead --

HAL'S MOM
I'm sorry, Bill...

And this next part we did not see the first time --

HAL'S MOM (CONT'D)
... but I guess I gotta go now.

ON YOUNG BILL as he turns, sees Hal with the Monkey, locks eyes with the goddamn thing and --

RESUME THE PRESENT MOMENT

Bill turns from the window, looks to the Monkey, suppressing anger while trying to appear pious, through clenched teeth --

BILL
I'm not asking for anything you wouldn't normally do anyway. Nothing you haven't already done probably a million times before... and *done to me personally*.

He plucks The Monkey from its perch, looking into its eyes --

BILL (CONT'D)
In your infinite wisdom, I trust your flaming sword of righteousness will cut the foul air and smite the right person. And I know that you know exactly who I'm talking about.

Bill takes the key in his fingertips and is about to turn it over to insert it, but then --

Without raising the drumstick --

The Monkey's grin widens, and hardens, its lips parting and curling back from terrible, subtly wet, very yellowed teeth.

Bill's never seen this before; he looks at the key in his fingers, not in The Monkey's back at all, and he's chilled.

BILL (CONT'D)
What the...

CASCO NEIGHBORHOOD STREET

Hal's Gremlin rolls up a short distance from Bill's house. We can hear the OFF-SCREEN SOUNDS of the neighbors trying to get their extra-crispy mother down out of the electrical wires.

IN HAL'S CAR

Hal at gunpoint, Petey next to him in the passenger seat.

THRASHER
All right stop here.

Hal stops the car, looking up to see a huge **VULTURE** on a long tree branch that bobs and CREAKS under its terrible weight --

HAL
Where are we?

THRASHER
Huh? Your brother's house. Don't pretend like you don't know.

Petey dares to look at Hal out of the corner of his eye.

HAL
We're... estranged. I haven't seen him in 20 years. 19.

THRASHER
Shit, that sucks. Why not?

HAL
I don't know... our dad left, our mom died suddenly, and I guess we just never figured out how to share the pain of that, and...

THRASHER
Jesus. Okay. Shut up.
(to Petey)
You.
(MORE)

THRASHER (CONT'D)
I can’t fit in the doggie door so you gotta go in there, act all nice with your Uncle so you can get the Monkey and bring it out to me.

PETEY
What Monkey?

HAL
He doesn’t know what Monkey...

PETEY
How does he know and I don’t?

HAL
I was going to tell him when he’s older. I was going to tell you when you’re older.

THRASHER
It has a little red vest, holds a drum. *And I need it*. Go get it or else I shoot this guy...

Hal looks at Petey who is trying not to look afraid --

PETEY
It’s a toy monkey?

HAL
No. And don’t call it that. It’s evil... it’s basically the Devil, okay? It makes it so that everyone close to you dies. We should leave it alone, drive far away and --

THRASHER
Seriously kid don’t come back without the goddamn Monkey or I swear I shoot this guy.

HAL
Okay! Hold on! Let me go with him.

THRASHER
No, it’s locked. Like a castle. There’s a doggy door in the back and your kid better hope he’s scrawny enough. Don’t try to call the police or do anything different than you bring me the Monkey or I swear I shoot this guy. Go.

Hal looks at Petey, sending whatever reassurance he can --

PETEY
Dad? I'm pretty scared.

HAL
It's okay. You can do it.

Petey is absorbing this, and Hal feels compelled to --

HAL (CONT'D)
You're smart. And you're funny. And you're stronger than you think. I believe in you.
(then)
Just, whatever you do, don't turn the key in the Monkey's back.

Petey was on the verge of garnering real courage, now looks back to Hal as if to say ***WHAT ON GOD'S GREEN FUCK***???

AT THE BACK DOOR

Petey comes around, the house looming, the corner windows pulsing with blue TV light through newspaper.

He sees the doggy door, gets down to angle one arm in, sees that YES he will be able to get his shoulder past the frame.

INSIDE BILL'S KITCHEN / BACK DOOR [CONTINUOUS]

Petey has twisted himself inside, stands up in the quiet.

PETEY
Good thing I'm not so muscular.

Petey moves carefully through the dark and we see the extent of the destroyed, creepy shabbiness of the old place. Petey casts nervous glances around, sees the blue TV light at the top of the central stairs, coming from the floor above --

IN HAL'S GREMLIN [SAME]

Hal watches the vulture, the branch CREAKING under its weight. Thrasher wipes his forehead with his free hand.

THRASHER
Fuck I'm sweating.

Hal sneaks a look at Thrasher in the rearview mirror --

HAL
You're not a cop, are you.

THRASHER
Shut up. I hate cops. My dad was a cop. Still is for all I know.
(then)
Left when I was a kid, never came back. It's why I hate cops. But also they're cops. Which is why I hate cops.

Hal finds himself still looking at this kid in the rearview --

THRASHER (CONT'D)
But whatever I turned out fine.

The patent untruth of that lands on Hal and he looks to Bill's house, his only son inside with a madman. And then --

A **THUD** on the hood: the **vulture** has landed there, slipping on the surface before regaining itself, staring at Hal.

INTERCUT WITH

BILL IN THE THRONE ROOM

The dull WHITE NOISE effect from the TVs has Bill in a grim trance. He's still holding The Monkey, watching it closely: it's grinning harder than usual, its drumstick down.

He turns it over, inserts the key, tries to turn it, but --

It won't turn. Bill's jaw tightens as he tries to force it --

PETEY (OFF)
Uncle Bill?

Bill turns, off-guard and exposed, sees Petey [for the first time in his life]; the resemblance strikes even batshit crazy Bill, and there is a flicker of emotion but he corrects it.

BILL
Petey. What a nice surprise...

He looks back to the grinning Monkey, his eyes shining --

PETEY
Are you okay?

BILL
Who me?

PETEY
Yeah. You.

BILL
(holds, then)
It's been a long time since anyone asked me that. But now that you mention it, no. No, I'm not okay. Not at all.
(holds up the Monkey)
It's my favorite toy from childhood. But it's broken.

Petey is looking at the Monkey --

PETEY
What's the matter with it?

BILL
It's supposed to do something with the drum. But it's stuck. Maybe you can fix it for me.

Bill un-loops the key from around his neck [the key still fixed in the slit] and holds out the Monkey, it's eyes shining in the flickering blue TV light. Petey assesses --

IN HAL'S GREMLIN [SAME]

Thrasher and Hal watch the vulture who watches them back --

THRASHER
Get that thing off of there...

HAL
With what?

THRASHER
I dunno, wipers. Something.

Hal flicks the **wipers** on. They SQUEAK back and forth on the dry windshield glass, but the vulture is unmoved --

IN THE THRONE ROOM

Petey beholds The Monkey with the same fixed gaze that Young Hal had, that Principal King had, and that Thrasher, and any other grown-up boy who was abandoned by his father would have when eye contact is made. A rising longing --

PETEY
Where does it come from?

BILL
That little guy used to belong to your grandfather. He brought it home from one of his work trips.
(then)
He was a pilot for American Airlines, and his name was Petey, too. Captain Peter Shelborn. Did you know that?

PETEY
Hal never tells me anything.

BILL
You call him Hal?

PETEY
He’s earned it.

Petey turns The Monkey over, sees the key.

BILL
Go ahead. Probably just needs a different touch. Your touch.

PETEY
He told me not to turn it.

BILL
Oh well... I guess Hal’s rules are the rules, huh?

Petey hesitates --

PETEY
He said it’s evil.

BILL
And you believed him?

Petey looks at his Uncle.

BILL (CONT’D)
How could it be evil? It’s just a child’s toy.

Petey hesitates, **then he tries the key**.

It CRANKS smoothly. The little motor deep inside The Monkey’s trunk WHINES. The drumstick arm shoots up. And then --

The drumstick arm immediately comes down again, kissing the drum with a familiar **TTRRAAATTT**.

Bill feels the cold wind on his neck and it feels great.

Petey feels the cold wind, too. Meanwhile --

IN THE CAR

Hal feels the wind, too, and holds still, eyes going from the vulture on the hood to Thrasher in the rearview --

THRASHER
Seriously, man, I don't like how its eyes look. Tap the horn or --

Thrasher wipes sweat from his forehead, leans over the seat for the horn, presses his gun hand into the headrest --

The gun goes off, the bullet whizzing past Hal's ear, shattering the windshield and missing the vulture by an inch!

The vulture is unmoved.

IN THE THRONE ROOM

Petey flinches at the gunshot, looks with alarm in its direction. Bill clocks Petey's reaction, and --

IN THE CAR

Hal and Thrasher are frozen stiff, watching the vulture, with no barrier of windshield glass between them anymore.

HAL
Let's... be careful with the pistol.

THRASHER
Yeah, okay...

Thrasher gingerly lifts his gun hand up and off the headrest, watching the gun's barrel the whole time as if it's alive --

And still the vulture never takes its eyes off of Hal, even when Hal shifts his gaze back to the rearview --

Thrasher being extra careful about how he moves with the gun in his hand, pointing it at the roof for safety --

Thrasher sits back, softly, pouring sweat, seat creaking --

THRASHER (CONT'D)
Man is it hot?

Not thinking about it, Thrasher raises his gun hand to wipe sweat from his forehead... the skin there is slippery, and --

IN THE THRONE ROOM

Petey flinches at a **SECOND GUNSHOT**, rushes to the window to look out but can't see anything past the taped up newspaper.

Petey's eyes shift, fighting off tears he can feel coming...

PETEY
(quietly)
Dad?

Bill clocks this, nearly smiles, puts his hand out --

BILL
Well done. Now give it back.

IN THE CAR

Hal's eyes are closed, shoulders tensed, and Thrasher's brains and skull particles are all over the rear windshield. Hal opens his eyes: the vulture still there, now turning its ugly head to look at Thrasher's prone corpse.

Now walking deliberately forward on the slippery hood of the Gremlin, as if planning to come in through the windshield.

HAL
(breathlessly)
Okay. Seatbelts.

Hal very carefully reaches over to UNCLICK his seatbelt, then very carefully opens his door and slips out of the car --

IN THE THRONE ROOM

Petey's face threatens to crumple under the pressure of tears as he looks at the Monkey, still grinning, drumstick down.

PETEY
This is it, isn't it? The thing that messed everything up...

Bill is struck by Petey's understanding, his fixation on the Monkey; he knows the feeling --

PETEY (CONT'D)
Messed you up... messed my dad up.
(then)
It kills people?

BILL
It sure does.

PETEY
You mean just anyone?

BILL
Sometimes it's just anyone. And sometimes it gets the most special person on the planet. In that way, it is "like life". It says so right on the box.

PETEY
Did it just kill my dad?

BILL
I'm sorry for your loss. But these things happen. Everyone dies. Now give it back.

Petey is connecting the dots, sees Bill's desperation --

PETEY
Does it ever kill the person who turns the key?

Bill is both impressed and a little scared.

BILL
No.

Petey is looking at Bill; he could crank the key but --

HAL (OFF)
(calling out)
Petey??!! Petey where are you??

Petey's face brightens with hope --

PETEY
Dad!

But Bill's eyes turn instantly dark and disconnected --

BILL
Turn it again.

Petey hesitates --

BILL (CONT'D)
(raging)
TURN THE GODDAMN KEY RIGHT NOW!

OUTSIDE [SAME MOMENT]

Hal heard that from one of the upstairs windows, the one with the blue light shifting behind it. Shit. He's around behind the house now, sees the doggy door. A pretty big one.

He gets down to brave it, lifting the rubber curtain to see in, and down to the stairs lit by the blue light. Jesus.

Hal stays as quiet as he can when he tries the doggy door, gets in his head, an arm up to the shoulder. No. Maybe he can reach the lock. No. And now he's stuck half in, half out --

INSIDE

Bill is impatient, his eyes mad as he strides over to swipe the Monkey away from Petey, kicking the kid in the ribs for good measure, sending him into a corner, doubled over.

He looks hard into the Monkey's leering face --

BILL
(nearly insane)
That's it. I'm not asking anymore. I'm ordering you. Kill him. Kill my dumbshit brother and do it now.

He turns the Monkey over, but **the key isn't there**. Because --

Petey has it, cowering in a corner, away from the door and any chance at escape --

BILL (CONT'D)
(hisses)
You have no right...

Bill is about to charge at Petey, but then --

The Monkey shifts in his hands --

Bill looks at it, its gears GRINDING as its leer WIDENS EVEN MORE, lips pulling back and now exposing **terrible pink gums**!!

Bill takes a sharp inhale as the Monkey's arm shoots up with its terrible suddenness, and without the key in its back!

BILL (CONT'D)
Hey.

And then the arm comes smoothly down. **TTTTRRAAAATTT.**

BILL (CONT'D)
But the key isn't...

On Bill as the Monkey raises its arm again, and again brings the drumstick immediately down. **TTTTTTTTTTRAT.**

BILL (CONT'D)
Oh. No.

Bill is holding the Monkey. It's just hit the drum without the key being cranked and is now resting in the drumstick-down, leering position. He doesn't know what to think.

BILL (CONT'D)
(quiet, to the Monkey)
Don't you need me to do it anymore?

ON BILL, eyes dull with sadness, then shifting with fear --

BILL (CONT'D)
(small)
But... that means I'm gonna...

The Monkey's arm springs up! Bill grabs it, but the goddamn thing's real strong, presses down like it's arm-wrestling!

BILL (CONT'D)
NO NO NO NO...!

Petey takes the opportunity to scramble out the door to --

BILL'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Dimly pulsating with shifting blue light, Petey runs, goes quickly down the steep stairs, nearly falling but making it to the bottom, catching his breath to reorient himself --

HAL (OFF)
(calls out)
PETEY?! YOU OKAY IN THERE?!

Petey looks to the sound of Hal's voice, goes for --

THE KITCHEN

Where he sees Hal stuck half-in/half-out of the doggy door. Hal doesn't notice Petey right away, and Petey feels a sudden surge of relief, his eyes welling up, a smile coming on.

PETEY
Hey.

HAL
Petey?? Oh thank God... come on, we gotta get out of here... *

PETEY
I saw the Monkey, dad... *

HAL
And now we gotta get as far away from it as we can... *Is that the key*?? *

PETEY *
Hold on. Wait. *

HAL
Petey, I'm serious. And I'm going to count to five.

PETEY
You're half in half out of a doggy door! That's no place to try and parent from!
(then) *
I want you to spend more time with me. *

Hal holds a pause, feels his way through it. Meanwhile:

UPSTAIRS [SAME MOMENT]

Bill is drenched with sweat and SOBBING, trying to hold the Monkey off but the drumstick arm down is *bearing down* --

The drumstick touches the drum and Bill pins the leering Monkey with his knee in its chest, arm pressed into its body--

But when the drumstick arm springs back up again --

It forces Bill's hip joint open, sending him sprawling across the room in agony.

BILL
AAAAARGGGGGHHH!

DOWNSTAIRS / KITCHEN [SAME MOMENT]

Petey and Hal heard Bill's cry out --

PETEY
I know you've been screwed up, and that's probably not going to just go away, but still it's better than Ted's family. They're always smiling, like crash test dummies.

HAL
Petey. Just let me in.

PETEY
If you let me in first.

Hal hears him, takes a breath, and --

HAL
I'm sorry, Petey. I should have been there for you, no matter what, no matter what happened to me.

Petey puts his hand out, as if to shake --

PETEY
Say you'll spend more time with me. And shake on it.

Petey steps closer to Hal, one arm through the doggy door.

PETEY (CONT'D)
And if you try to pull me out of this house after everything I just said, that sucks.

Hal holds, then reaches up, takes his son's hand, shakes it.

HAL
You're great, Petey, and I want to spend as much time with you as I can.

Petey smiles, but then feels Hal gently pulling him closer... but it's only into an **half-in, half-out doggy door hug**. Nice.

HAL (CONT'D)
Now come help me get unstuck --

UPSTAIRS [SAME MOMENT]

Bill in the corner like a beaten dog, eyes streaming tears as he looks back to the Monkey, sitting upright and leering at him, *lowering the drumstick to the drum, over and over and over*: **TTRRRATT. TTTTTRAAT. TTTTRAAAAAATTTTTT** --

Bill's swivels to see out a window, into the distance where a modest mushroom cloud is blooming! To the Monkey --

BILL
(sobs, shouts)
PLEASE STOP!

The Monkey's arm springs up, and it holds there.

Bill waits. Is it over? Nothing happens, but then --

An APPROACHING SCREAM, coming in hot from high over his head, high over the house, from high up the sky --

He looks up at the ceiling just in time for a SPLINTERING CRASH as a **SKYDIVER** crashes through it, obliterating the Monkey's throne in an explosion of TV parts and sizzling cables and blood and bones and organs!

Bill covers his head, drags himself into the corner, looks back to the Monkey, untouched by the carnage, arm raised --

BILL (CONT'D)
WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME??!!

Its lips close over its spotted gums and yellow'd teeth, grin smoothing out to leave the deadpan expression in its place.

An expression/drumstick position combination we've not seen:

Drum arm held up, but with its mouth straight and closed...

A look of... *solemn judgement*.

FOOTSTEPS charging up the stairs, causing the old house to vibrate and shudder, brittle glass in the windows wobbling --

Bill braces himself for some kind of attack --

But it's HAL and PETEY in the doorway. They see the skydiving carnage, and the Monkey, its arm still raised.

Hal rushes for it, picks it up --

HAL
Shit. Its arm is up...

Bill knows it's clear he's been crying, puts on a hard face.

BILL
Hello, dumbshit.

HAL
Are you serious? That's what you say at a time like this?!

BILL
(shrugs)
A dumbshit's what you are.

Hal balls a fist, takes a menacing step at Bill who tries to stand but collapses in agony - his leg in a very bad way.

HAL
You were really trying to kill me, weren't you?

BILL
Yes, of course I was.

HAL
You goddamn SONOFAWHORE! That's what all this carnage was for? It could have gotten Petey!! And for what, huh?? WHY??

Hal raises a clenched fist, but Bill doesn't flinch. Instead:

BILL
Because you killed my mom.

Hal feels it like a punch in the guts, and he holds.

HAL
What are you talking...?

BILL
I know you wanted to kill me, but the goddamn thing doesn't take requests. Obviously. I've been turning the key with you in mind for days. And nothing.

Hal's clenched fist starts to soften.

HAL
Jesus Christ, Bill.

BILL
And you killed my dad, too.
(an insecure pause)
He probly liked me, thought I was swell, until you came along. You were a colicky baby, cried all the time and he couldn't handle it. So he left. And he died.

Hal looks at Bill, the wounded child inside of him now at the surface. He looks at Petey. Same.

HAL
I think Dad left because of the Monkey. He wanted to protect us, so he tried to take it away with him. But it came back.
(then)
And then I did the same thing.

Hal looks at Petey --

HAL (CONT'D)
None of us did anything to deserve what happened to us. We just happened to be there when it did.

Bill is quietly taking this in, too, his eyes softening just a little. And --

IN A VERY BRIEF FLASH

Hal and Bill's Mom in her sunny kitchen, moments before she will die. She turns to look at us --

RESUMING HAL AND BILL IN THE THRONE ROOM

Hal looks down at Bill --

HAL
It really sucks that your mom died, Bill. I know how you feel.
(then)
She was my mom, too.

Bill holds a pause. He never liked to think of it that way --

BILL
Huh. Yeah. I guess I never thought of it that way before. *

HAL
You're the only person on Earth who could have known what it was like for me. And I'm the only person on Earth who could have understood what you were going through.
(then)
I wish we could have been there for each other.
(then)
(MORE)

HAL (CONT'D)
What'd'ya say, Bill? Brothers, again?

Hal puts out his hand and Bill looks at it before tentatively putting his out, too. But before they touch, Bill pulls it back. Hal keeps his hand out. Bill reaches out again, *again pulls it back at the last minute.* Hal remains --

Bill does feel a little childish and, after a moment, he takes Hal's hand. They shake. It's a moment.

Bill manages to look Hal in the eyes. He still doesn't really want to be doing that.

Bill looks away from Hal, looks over to Petey.

BILL
So, you two, what, you're on some kind of road trip or something?

HAL
Uh. Yeah. Yeah, I guess we are. Kind of a father-son, uh, road trip.

Bill lets that sink in.

BILL
I would have liked to have been able to do something like that at least once.

HAL
So come with us.

BILL
I haven't left this house in...

He pretends to have to think about it --

BILL (CONT'D)
9 years and 11 days.

Bill looks at Hal, a real sadness in his eyes. And then --

PETEY
Uh... Dad..?

We hear the familiar GRINDING of GEARS inside The Monkey, as the thing suddenly shifts in Hal's hands.

Hal startles, stumbles back, drops it on the floor --

It lands right side up --

They all look at it. Its deadpan expression, its bright eyes.

They can all tell that it's looking right at Petey --

PETEY (CONT'D)
Dad?

And then, staring right at Petey --

It's arm starts to come down, more slowly than usual --

TRRATTT.

And then again. **TRRATTT.**

PETEY (CONT'D)
Dad, I'm scared. I don't wanna --

TRRATTT TRRATTT TRRATTT TRRATTT TRRATTT --

The speed of the drumming speeding up --

BILL
It's okay, Petey.

Bill is holding eye contact with it --

TRRATTT TRRATTT TRRATTT TRRATTT TRRATTT --

And then --

BILL (CONT'D)
(to The Monkey)
Hey. You can take me.

The Monkey pauses its motion, as if considering it. They all watch with apprehension, like they'd watch a coiled snake.

HAL
Bill, what are you...? The goddamn thing doesn't take requests...

BILL
It's the opposite of a request, dumbshit. It's a sacrifice. And show me a god that doesn't want one of those.

HAL
But you can't just die now... what about being brothers again?

Bill looks to Hal, emotion in his eyes --

BILL
Do the father-son thing instead.

And -- *

IN BILL'S MEMORY

His Mom in her kitchen, looking directly at us [at Bill] with a bittersweet smile, like *we both know what will happen next and it's okay that it will --*

RESUMING THE PRESENT

Bill's eyes are soft with emotion. He'll cry if he's not careful.

BILL
I'm sorry, Hal...
(a pause, and then)
But I guess I gotta go now.

And with that The Monkey resumes its action, the drumstick coming down and kissing the drum with one last **TTTRAATTTT.** *

All three Shelborn boys wait. *

But only Bill feels a sharp pain in his arm, and has to squeeze it hard with an intake of breath.

And only Bill feels a crumpling in the center of his chest.

BILL (CONT'D)
(wincing)
Ow.

His breath catches as he presses his hand into his heart --

BILL (CONT'D)
(barely)
Yeah. A broken heart makes sense.

Bill folds over on himself, and dies.

And everyone in the room is very still, especially The Monkey which finally does seem as inert as a child's toy.

HAL'S GREMLIN [PRE-DAWN]

Hal and Petey roll through town, dulled by shock, not registering the silent, ravaged neighborhoods through the empty windshield frame where the glass used to be.

The Monkey's blue box on the backseat; Thrasher's viscera has been wiped up pretty well back there, but only pretty well.

HAL
Still want to see the lake?

PETEY
(pause)
Sure.

HAL
(pause)
Cool.

THE LAKE [DAWN]

Idyllic as hell. The cold blue light of morning behind trees.

PETEY
Is Ted still going to adopt me?

HAL
No. That's not going to happen.

PETEY
How you gonna do that?

HAL
Guess I'll have to be braver than I usually am.

Hal and Petey stare through the windshield frame, out onto the surface of the lake, as flat and dark-deep as a mirror.

PETEY
You know, you've been trying to get far away this whole time. Far awau from The Monkey, from me. But it's not a far away kind of thing.
(then)
The Monkey doesn't kill the person who turns the key, *the person closest to it*. Because it *wants* you to be close to it. It's not some vengeful god, and it's not the Devil, either.
(then)
The Monkey is a kid. An angry kid who lashes out because no one's ever wanted to stay close to him.

Hal takes that in. And despite all of the horror that's been wrought, he smiles a little.

HAL *
So what do you want to do now? *

PETEY
I guess we gotta figure out what
we're going to do with it... *

HAL
We keep it close. We accept that *
it's ours and we hold on tight.

After a moment, Petey turns in his seat to look behind him --

PETEY (OFF)
Uh. Dad? Did you put the box
somewhere? It was on the backseat
the whole time. But now it's gone.

Hal is looking out over the water. Of course it's gone.

HAL
It can teleport, you know.

PETEY
(oh)
Where does it go when it teleports?

HAL
I don't know. All I know is it's *
not here now, and that's good.
(then)
Hey, I've got an idea what we can
do.

PETEY
What?

HAL
Let's go dancing.

PETEY
Dancing? Like with our bodies?
Where the shit did that come from?

He looks at Petey, a spitting image of Bill when Bill was his big brother and tormentor. The Universe is a funny f&%$er.

HAL
It comes from your grandmother.

Petey thinks about that, feels that.

PETEY
Cool. *

HAL
Yeah, it is cool. *
(then) *
And, hey. Language.

We stay on Hal, his eyes filling with love, and with longing. *
"Give A Little Bit" by Supertramp fades up in the background. *

THE END. *